THE THEME OF THE MUTILATION OF THE CORPSE IN THE ILIAD

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LUGDUNI BATAVORUM E. J. BRILL 1971

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BY

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TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER

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PREFACE

The Achilles of the *Iliad* unites in himself the extreme polarities of Homer's heroic world, which are also in part the polarities of all Greek culture: immense capacities for love and for hatred, social responsibility and self-centered recklessness, devotion to personal ties and tragic isolation. Like Sophocles' Oedipus, his very nature is problematical, commits him to suffering: "Such natures are justly most painful for themselves to bear," says Creon in the play (*O.T.* 674-5). Achilles' passion and intensity destroy what he himself loves most deeply. From his birth, as his goddess-mother laments, he has been set apart in his hard fate (*Il.* 1. 417-8):

νῦν δ' ἅμα τ' ὠκύμορος καὶ ὀϊζυρὸς περὶ πάντων
ἔπλεο· τῶ σε κακῇ αἴσῃ τέκον ἐν μεγάροισι.

The question of Achilles' character inevitably involves the question of the image of man and the ethical attitudes framed in the *Iliad*. These are, of course, vast subjects on which many *megala biblia* have been and could be written; but perhaps this small study may cast a little light in the direction of these very large issues.

This *libellus* also has some more limited and technical aims. The last few years of Homeric scholarship have seen a growing recognition of the so-called flexibility of Homer's formulaic style. The present work shares a number of assumptions in this "revisionist" approach to the great work of Milman Parry. It has a twofold, yet essentially unitary purpose. First, I seek to appreciate and interpret certain aspects of the narrative movement of *Iliad* 16-24 through the changes rung on the theme of outraging the corpse of a fallen warrior. Second, I hope to demonstrate, within the confines of a single, well-defined theme, how Homer manipulates his formulas for special effects and how contrasts and parallels between analogous scenes enlarge the range and significance of the action.

Here too it is helpful to glance at the larger field of Greek culture. Homer is the most Greek of the Greeks. He achieves the most powerful effects within the severe restraints of a highly disciplined form.

Some critics have drawn analogies between the formulaic style and baroque music. Closer to hand lie the parallels with Geometric

vase-painting suggested by T.B.L. Webster and Cedric Whitman. Looking to the monumental achievements of later Greek art, however, one might consider the analogy with the Doric temple. In both cases the demanding restrictions of a conventionalized form serve as the stimulus to subtle and significant refinements. In both cases the art form declines when development and refinement are no longer possible, when the convention has frozen into lifeless repetition or static decoration. The looser, more florid style of the later Homeric Hymns and the mechanical stiffness and perfunctory, inelastic quality of echinus, abacus, and triglyph-metope frieze in the Doric temple of the Hellenistic period represent opposite, but analogous modes of disintegration within a once vital art form. The subtle refinements introduced by the poet or the architect may be scarcely perceptible to the casual observer. But the situation alters when one grasps these variations in their relation to the entire work and the entire style. The greatness of the Homeric and of the Doric styles lies in their direct confrontation with large, fundamental forms and conditions and in the surge of power conveyed by their union of austere restraint with bold expressiveness.

The margin of freedom within which Homer practised the ancient craft of formulaic song and the architect plotted the subtle curvature of rectilinear lines from the stylobate to the pediment of the developed Doric temple is also a measure of that resistance to the mechanical and the non-human which pervades all of Greek culture. Possibly the care and effort with which the artist purchased this freedom are more moving when his medium is recalcitrant marble rather than pliantly winged words. Yet Homer's monumentality was surely not won without effort, and his grandeur is unthinkable without the disciplined rigidity and constancy of the formulaic elements. Both the poet and the architect, in their union of flexibility and fixity, evince a characteristically Hellenic valuation of spirit over matter, and to this the whole course of Western civilization is deeply indebted. Both styles posit freedom as an outgrowth of order and control, as a creation of man realizing himself in his most fully human capacities. Both art forms cultivate discipline not as an end in itself, but as a realistic reflection of a humanly grasped world order and therefore as a necessary means of interpreting man's existence and of giving greater depth, vigor, and tone to the culture of the mind.

For the appearance of this study I am doubly indebted to Brown University, first for a faculty research grant in the summer of 1970, when this work was put into final form, and second for a generous grant toward the cost of publication from the General Faculty Research Reserve Fund. I am most grateful to the Provost of Brown University, Professor Merton P. Stoltz, and to the chairman of its Classics Department, Professor Michael C. J. Putnam, for their good offices in securing this latter grant. I wish to thank the editor of this series, Professor W. J. Verdenius, and my colleague at Brown, Professor William F. Wyatt, Jr., for a number of helpful suggestions. It is a pleasure to record my thanks once again to Mrs. Robert S. Eisenauer of Brown University for her usual care and accuracy in typing a difficult manuscript and to Signora Inez Longobardi and the staff of the library of the American Academy in Rome for valuable aid in procuring books. For such deficiencies as remain responsibility lies with me alone.

Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome
November 24, 1970.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abh. Göttingen: *Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen*, phil.—hist. Klasse.
Abh. Leipzig: *Abhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* [*zu Leipzig*]
AC: *L'Antiquité Classique*
AJP: *American Journal of Philology*
Arch. Glott. Ital.: *Archivio glottologico italiano*
CJ: *Classical Journal*
C & M: *Classica et Mediaevalia*
CP: *Classical Philology*
CR: *Classical Review*
GRBS: *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
HSCP: *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
PP: *La parola del passato*
REG: *Revue des Études Grecques*
RhM: *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*
TAPA: *Transactions of the American Philological Association*
UCPCP: *University of California Publications in Classical Philology*
YCS: *Yale Classical Studies*

The Greek text of Homer cited is generally that of the Oxford Classical Texts, edited by T. W. Allen and D. B. Monro.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: THEME AND FORMULA

The *Iliad* ends with the funeral of Hector. In itself, this ending is a striking conclusion to a poem whose chief hero is Achilles. Simultaneously, it is the completion of a theme which dominates the last third of the epic, the treatment and especially the maltreatment of the dead. This theme pertains most immediately to the major figures, Achilles, Hector, and Patroclus; but by the end of the poem it includes nearly all the main characters. To some degree, as we shall see, it also guides the rhythm of the narrative in the last eight books.

The Homeric art of composition consists in large part in manipulation of standard motifs and recurrent formulaic details. Scenes of arming, deciding, fighting, preparing meals, sailing and boarding ships all have certainly fairly constant forms and are described in formulaic lines or phrases used again and again, sometimes varied slightly, sometimes repeated verbatim.[1] The technique is not as mechanical as it might at first sound or as it has appeared to some students of Homer's formulas.[2] The poet could expand or contract

[1] For the theme see Walter Arend, *Die typischen Szenen bei Homer* (Berlin 1933); A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales = Harvard Stud. in Comp. Lit.* 24 (Cambridge, Mass. 1960) chap. 4; *idem*, "Homer and Other Epic Poetry" in *A Companion to Homer*, edd. Wace and Stubbings (London 1962) 189-93; G. S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge 1962) 72-80.

[2] Milman Parry, whose collected papers now appear under the title *The Making of Homeric Verse*, ed. A. M. Parry (Oxford 1971), did not live long enough to develop the possible implications of his theories and in his pioneering work naturally concentrated upon the narrowly functional aspect of the formula. Hence he dealt with only a small range of Homer's total language, what P. Chantraine has called "ces formules banales" which "constituent comme les chevilles visibles du récit et en font ressortir la charpente. Elles n'expriment que des idées simples: ce sont les plus facilement interchangeables . . .": "Remarques sur l'emploi des formules dans le premier chant de l'*Iliade*," *REG* 45 (1932) 124. For other work on the aesthetic possibilities of the formulas see S.E. Bassett, *The Poetry of Homer = Sather Classical Lectures* 15 (Berkeley 1938) 16ff.; M. W. Edwards, "Some Stylistic Notes on *Iliad* XVIII," *AJP* 88 (1968) 257-83; Kirk (above, note 1) 80-83; Adam Parry, "Have We Homer's *Iliad* ?" *YCS* 20 (1966) 177-216, especially 191-201; T. G. Rosenmeyer, "The Formula in Early Greek Poetry," *Arion* 4 (1965) 293-311; J. A. Russo, "Homer Against His Tradition," *Arion* 7 (1968) 275-95; C.P. Segal, "Andromache's *Anagnorisis*: Formulaic Artistry in *Iliad* 22.437-76," *HSCP* 75 (1971) 33-57; M. H. A. L. H

these standardized blocks, add or elaborate details, and create new combinations of the familiar material. The extraordinary power and richness of the *Iliad* are due in no small part to the poet's ability to draw upon a vast impersonal (or perhaps one should rather say multipersonal) tradition, and yet to arrange, select, and elaborate upon the elements in that tradition to a degree which surpassed all his predecessors and successors.

The theme of the mutilation of the corpse was doubtless well-imbedded in the epic tradition.[1] It was a useful device which could be added to intensify a battle scene. It also has moving affective possibilities. From the rich shaft graves and the great *tholoi* tombs at Mycenae to the geometric burials and *prothesis*-scenes on the Dipylon amphoras down to the elaborately sculpted *stelai* of the Kerameikos cemetery in the classical age, all of Hellenic culture displays an extraordinary solicitude for the remains of the deceased. There is no reason to think that the eighth-century Greek was any less sensitive than his forebears to the care for the dead. Nor, conversely, need one argue that the *Iliad* (any more than, say, the *Antigone* or *Ajax*) testifies to a new upsurge of feeling about funeral rites.[2] Homer is drawing upon a special area of

Van der Valk, "The Formulaic Character of Homeric Poetry and the Relation between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*," *AC* 35 (1966) 5-70, especially 46-70; William Whallon, *Formula, Character, and Context*: *Studies in Homeric, Old English, and Old Testament Poetry*, "Publications of the Center for Hellenic Studies" (Cambridge, Mass. 1969) 1-70. Recent technical studies have also shown that the Homeric formula was capable of a range of flexibility and a degree of innovation far beyond what Parry had envisioned in his early studies: see A. Hoekstra, *Homeric Modifications of Formulaic Prototypes* (Amsterdam 1965), with a valuable outline of Parry's development, pp. 8-12; J. B. Hainsworth. *The Flexibility of the Homeric Formula* (Oxford 1968). See also A. Parry's Introduction to *The Making of Homeric Verse* (above), especially l-lxii.

[1] "Theme" is a difficult term in current Homeric criticism. See J. B. Hainsworth, *CR* n.s. 20 (1970) 16-17. It can be applied to recurrent and more or less mechanical details of the action which are usually described in similar formulas (e.g. eating, sailing, arming, etc.). I use it in a somewhat broader sense to mean a recurrent detail of the plot which recurs (with variation) throughout the poem. "Corpse theme" and "mutilation theme" are used more or less synonymously, though sometimes with a slight difference of emphasis. By "mutilation theme" I mean specific details of rending tearing, disfiguring the body. "Corpse theme" includes these details, but extends more broadly to include more general ideas of funerals, lamentations, and the like, although in *Iliad* 16-24 the "corpse theme" usually implies the details of mutilation too, if only in the background.

[2] See Wolfgang Schadewaldt, "Hektors Tod," in *Von Homers Welt und Werk*[3] (Stuttgart 1959) 350, with note 2 on page 479.

reverence in Greek culture. Because this theme also stands in the central axis of the movement from Patroclus' death to Achilles' revenge, it has a wider range of possible variation and a more integral relation to the fundamental meaning of the poem than subsidiary formulaic themes like arming or eating.

Homer makes the corpse theme part of a developmental progression in the action. He incorporates it into an elaborate architectural composition. In achieving this end, he individualizes and emphasizes certain crucial details and delineates certain clearly marked stages. Thus the repetitions of the motif are not just the inert necessities of an oral, improvised technique, but gain a dynamic, cumulative force which strengthens the main thrust of the action.

Scholars like Armstrong, Bowra, Calhoun, Chantraine, Russo, and others have tried to show that the repeated themes and formulas of the Homeric style were capable of deliberate artistic exploitation.[1] The present essay follows in this line of interpretation, though its scope is not restricted to formular artistry alone.[2]

We must, of course, be cautious here. A very large percentage of Homer's formulas have no local significance. They signify instead

[1] See J. I. Armstrong, The Arming Motif in the *Iliad*," *AJP* 79 (1958) 337-54; C. M. Bowra, "Style," in *Companion to Homer* (above, p. 1 note 1) 34-6; *idem, Tradition and Design in the Iliad* (Oxford 1930) 92ff.; G. M. Calhoun, "Homeric Repetitions," *UCPCP* 12, no. 1 (1933) 1-25; *idem,* "The Formula in Homer—"Επεα πτερόεντα," *CP* 30 (1935) 215-27; Chantraine (above, p. 1 note 2) 121-54; G. F. Else, "Homer and the Homeric Problem," in *Lectures in Memory of Louise Taft Semple = Univ. of Cincinnati Classical Studies* 1 (Princeton 1967) 348ff.; A. W. Gomme, "Homer and Recent Criticism," in *More Essays in Greek History and Literature* (Oxford 1962) 12-14; A. Parry (above, p. 1, note 2) 197-200; Russo (above, p. 1, note 2) 275-95; Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 41-2, 312; C. Segal, "The Embassy and the Duals of *Iliad* 9.182-98," *GRBS* 9 (1968) 101-14; *idem,* "Transition and Ritual in Odysseus' Return," *PP* fasc. 116 (1967) 321-42; C. H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass. 1958) 108ff., especially 114-15; Douglas Young, "Never Blotted a Line ? Formula and Premeditation in Homer and Hesiod," *Arion* 6 (1967) 311ff.

[2] Whether Homer's formular and structural artistry is the final culmination of the oral style or the happy fruit of a union between traditional oral techniques with writing (or dictation) lies beyond the scope of this paper. For discussion of this controversial matter see Kirk (above, p. 1, note 1) 68-72; A. Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature*², tr. Willis and de Heer (London 1966) 37-40; Lord, "Homer and Other Epic Poetry" (above, p. 1, note 1) 193-7; A. Parry (above, p. 1, note 2) *passim*; H. T. Wade-Gery, *The Poet of the Iliad* (Cambridge 1952) 38-41. For sharp, but not altogether convincing criticisms of the positions of Adam Parry and Kirk see A. B. Lord, "Homer as an Oral Poet," *HSCP* 72 (1967) 1-46, especially 1-14.

the continuity and the grandeur of the heroic tradition itself. In the words of Milman Parry, "Pour lui [Homère], comme pour son auditoire, l'épithète fixe ornait moins un seul vers, même moins un seul poème, que toute la poésie héroique." [1] In thus celebrating and adorning "all heroic poetry," the formulas also contribute to that stateliness, dignity, sense of tragic inflexibility which are the extraordinary achievements of this heroic style. To insist blindly on Homer's "originality" would be to rob his poetry of one of its essential and most moving qualities.

Yet it is precisely against this background of monolithic formulaic invariability that the unique expression or even the familiar formula, given a sufficiently charged context, can have an electrifying effect. The celebrated lines from the *teichoskopia* may serve as an example (3. 243-4):

ὣς φάτο, τοὺς δ' ἤδη κάτεχεν φυσίζοος αἶα
ἐν Λακεδαίμονι αὖθι, φίλῃ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ.

Here the unique and poignant expression, φυσίζοος αἶα,[2] stands over against the formulaic φίλῃ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ. The special appropriateness and freshness of the former phrase heighten the tragic factuality and stern inflexibility of the latter, and *vice versa*. The contrast between non-formulaic and formulaic language sharpens the meaningful contrast between the two aspects of "earth" here presented: the impersonality of earth as the tireless giver of life on the one hand and the personal meaning with which men invest the "dear earth" of their homeland on the other hand.

This reciprocal interplay between the new and the unexpected is an essential part of the dynamics of Homer's poetry. It can, as in the passage just cited, suggest those fundamental antinomies of human life which are posed again and again in the Homeric poems: man's transient existence against the constant fixed processes of nature; his intensity of changeful physical and emotional life against the uninflected, unbending sameness of nature's eternal return.

Homer does not use the mutilation theme merely to increase excitement or arouse pathos. He also develops that theme over a

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[1] M. Parry, *L'Épithète traditionnelle dans Homère* (Paris 1928) 172; see also Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 113.

[2] See however *Il.* 21.63 and *h. Ven.* 125. *Od.* 11.301 is a reminiscence of *Il.* 3.243. See Ruskin's famous comment on *Il.* 3.343 in his essay, "Of the Pathetic Fallacy," *Modern Painters* 4.13.

long stretch of the action and builds it into a vast architectural construction. This architectural structuring of a major theme rests, in turn, on the poet's ability to evoke parallels and contrasts. This use of parallel and contrast, analogy and polarity, is, as Schadewaldt and others have shown, basic to Homer's art.[1] It clearly underlies, for example, a cast of mind which could produce simile after simile as a basic tool of descriptive narration.[2]

The *Iliad* already possesses that severity and economy found in the best of Greek art and literature in the classical period. It is natural that an art form characterized by a certain austerity and spareness should make as full a use as possible of parallels and contrasts. The poem has a limited number of major characters, only the barest indications of setting, and a relatively small range of variation in the types of action. Such limitations could result in monotony. But Homer, like the tragic poets after him and like the architects and sculptors of the fifth century, turns these limitations into an asset. The very lack of variety in the action and characters permits parallels and contrasts to stand out with all the greater prominence. Undistracted by endlessly changing details of surroundings, free of the demands of extensive local variations (the recherché felicities of a written as opposed to an oral style), both poet and audience can concentrate on the most significant relations between analogous episodes. The very sameness of recurrent patterns makes the listener all the more sensitive to variation when it occurs.

Here the language and plot, the handling of formula and theme, must be seen as interlocking phenomena, not as separate, compartmentalized spheres of poetic activity. The parallels and contrasts do not arise merely from similarities in the narrative situation. They are also reinforced and at times even created by the repeated formulas from which these scenes are built. It is not that Homer felt a similarity between two situations (the deaths of Patroclus and Hector, let us say) and then got the idea of using the same formulas to call the similarity to our attention. Rather, the parallels

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[1] Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 218, 308f., 329; *idem, Iliasstudien* = *Abh. Leipzig* 43,6 (1938), ed. 3 (Darmstadt 1966) 133-4.

[2] See, for example, Kurt Riezler, "Das homerische Gleichnis und der Anfang der Philosophie," in *Um die Begriffswelt der Vorsokratiker*, ed. H. -G. Gadamer (Darmstadt 1968) 1-20, especially 9-12, 17-18 (originally published in *Die Antike* 12 [1936] 253-71); Hermann Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*[2] (Munich 1962) 59ff.

in the narrative situation themselves evoke the formulaic repetitions; and, conversely, the repetitions allow the parallels (or divergences) of situation to clarify and develop.[1] The poet "thinks" in terms of his formulas, and any given formula has the *potential* of calling up the similar scenes where similar formulas occurred. In actual fact, however, this potential is realized only in a limited number of cases, for many parallels involve formulas too trite or too common to be noticed or minor characters or relatively unimportant situations which have little bearing on the main lines of the action. Scholars will not always agree on which repetitions are "important," but three general criteria may be offered: (1) the use of formulas which do not occur so often as to make a particular instance of repetition virtually unnoticeable or meaningless (though here it must be recognized that even fairly common formulas may be used in unexpected and poetically significant ways); (2) the involvement of major characters; and (3) a plot situation of heightened emotion or intense pathos, or (what amounts to the same thing) some crisis in the fortunes of major figures or the community as a whole.

The "generative view" of the Homeric formula expounded by M.N. Nagler in a stimulating and important article can contribute toward understanding this relation between formulaic repetitions on the one hand and analogies in the plot-situations on the other.[2] According to Nagler's hypothesis, the poet does not merely possess a number of fixed, isolated phrases (formulas) which he has memorized and inserts into his verse at the right (i.e. metrically necessary) moment. Rather, he has in his mind a fluid set of related word- and phrase-patterns, a "mental template" or "preverbal Gestalt," Each "formula" is but a specific realization of this Gestalt; and related "formulas" are "allomorphs" of the same, preexisting Gestalt.[3] A specific plot situation realizes or crystallizes a

[1] The question of the consciousness or the unconsciousness of these analogies is ultimately unresolvable and probably irrelevant: see M.N. Nagler, "Towards a Generative View of the Oral Formula," *TAPA* 98 (1967) p. 296 with note 49.

[2] Nagler (preceding note) 269-311, especially 281-91. I should point out, however, that, while Nagler relates the differences between "allomorphs" of the Gestalt to their poetic function (e.g. pp. 293ff.), he does not treat the relation to one another in different contexts. The view which I present here, therefore, goes somewhat beyond Nagler's theory and implies a greater degree of structural artistry on the part of the poet than was Nagler's concern.

[3] I put quotation marks around "formula" here, for I use the word in this paragraph in Nagler's sense, i.e. one of several possible realizations of a preexisting "mental template" or "preverbal Gestalt."

specific form of the Gestalt (a "formula"). Thus the same or closely related "formulas" will not only be related to one another formally through the recurrence of the same words in the same or similar metrical positions; they will also be related through the plot situations which have triggered the realization of the Gestalt in this particular form. Further, plot situation and formula in closely parallel passages will also be related to one another because an underlying set of associations calls into play both the situation and the formulas which build it. Plot situation and formula, in turn, are *simultaneous* functions of deeper patterns of thought and design in the poet's mind, broader and more extensive Gestalten, which we can probably never fully fathom.

Because we are talking of patterns of which we can see only the divergent specific products (the "formulas"), our descriptive terminology is of necessity metaphorical. Another of the metaphors suggested by Nagler may be especially useful in formulating the problem. He suggests describing a group of related formulas as constituting a "family," of which each member is a specific realization of the parent Gestalt.[1] Resemblances and discrepancies among the different members of the "family" of related phrases will then be a function of the parallels or contrasts between the situations which called them forth. In some cases the similarity between two closely parallel situations will generate the same or closely related members of the "family": that is, the recurrence of the identical or nearly identical formula will underscore the analogy between the two situations. In other cases, a related, but different situation will realize a form of the parent Gestalt which, in its newness or originality or strangeness or other striking quality, will emphasize the uniqueness of the plot situation which called it forth, while still clearly marking the kinship of that situation to those cousin situations to which it is both similar and dissimilar. The same quality of artistry is operative in the microcosm of the formula and the macrocosm of the plot structure, for they both flow from the same underlying reservoir of associations and mental patterns and are in perpetual interaction with one another.

We cannot here pursue Nagler's interesting arguments, which would take us further into the theoretical questions of the Homeric formula than the scope of the present study permits. Our concern

[1] For this terminology, ultimately derived from Wittgenstein, see Nagler (above, p. 6, note 1) 281-2.

is to show how the corpse theme draws upon the rich possibilities of analogy and contrast in the plot situations of the *Iliad* and how it uses the repetition of or divergence from familiar formulaic patterns to point up nuances of meaning in the progression of the action.

CHAPTER TWO

MUTILATION AND HOMERIC VALUES

The very first lines of the *Iliad* warn us of the sufferings and disasters to be inflicted by the Wrath of Achilles. Prominent among these is the mutilation of corpses by "dogs and all the birds." (1. 4-5).[1] This warning is fulfilled sporadically in the first two-thirds of the epic. Here the theme of the exposure of the corpse occurs generally in contexts of violent emotions or great intensity of action. In 2. 393 Agamemnon threatens slackers with vultures. In 4.237 he encourages his troops with assurances that "vultures will eat the tender flesh" of those who have broken the oaths. In 8.379-80 Athena ends a violent and defiant speech with the assertion, "Someone of the Trojans will sate dogs and birds with his fat and his flesh, falling by the ships of the Achaeans." The details of "fat and flesh" (δημῷ καὶ σάρκεσσι) mark the degree of her rage and vehemence and suit the ἦθος of a moment when the goddess' heart, as Iris says, is "raging madly" (ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μαίνεται ἦτορ 8.413). These threats of mutilated corpses are also appropriate to the mood of rebellious virulence which smoulders on Olympus, despite Zeus' rebuke and threats, all through the next scene (8.426-484).

Athena's two lines recur in a speech of Hector to Ajax, a speech full of boastful hyperboles (13.831-2 = 8.379-80).[2] In a more important and more emotional context Patroclus cries out with pity before the wounded Eurypylus that the Greeks will "sate swift dogs with their shining fat" (11.818). This episode is "the beginning of evil for him" (11.604): shortly afterwards he makes the fateful decision to follow Nestor's suggestion (11.794-803) and ask Achilles to let him enter the battle with the Myrmidons (11.838-41). Since the corpse theme has a special importance for Patroclus later, it is significant that it should appear here at this turning point in the plot and in his destiny.

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[1] I accept the vulgate in preference to Zenodotus' δαῖτα. The reading πᾶσι is especially appropriate to a statement of the broad generalization and massive inclusiveness of the corpse theme at the beginning of the poem.

[2] The additional (formulaic) detail of Ajax' "delicate flesh" (χρόα λειριόεντα 13.830) is a distinctive touch characteristic of an encounter between two impassioned warriors and characteristic also of Hector's confidence.

There are, of course, also actual mutilations of the corpses of warriors on the field of battle, notably in the Doloneia (10.455-7) and in Agamemnon's *aristeia* (cf. 11. 146-7) which will be considered later in a different connection.[1] It is amidst the extreme violence and cruelty of book 11 that even the usually prudent and restrained Odysseus threatens the dying Socus with the loss of his funeral rites (11.451-5), although he says nothing of the actual mutilation of the corpse.

Before we begin the main analysis of the corpse theme we must face a fundamental question. Does Homer regard the mutilation of the corpse as a cruel and savage act, or does he merely accept it as the ordinary practice of war ? Intimately related to this question is the larger question of Homer's moral sensitivity and sophistication.

The "primitivist" view of Homer enjoys the happy advantage of simplicity. It assumes that Homer shares the savagery of his heroes and that we interpose our Christian ethic when we express revulsion, horror, compassion over details like mutilation.[2] There is danger here of making Homer fight the Battle of the Ancients and Moderns in different form. The simplistic dichotomies of the "objective" Homer and the "subjective" modern, or of the "primitive" Homer and the "civilized" Virgil are always enticing.[3] But Homer is himself a voice of civilization, the first such voice in the West; and behind him there already loom the *polis* and its communal values (though also its fierce competitions).

The "primitivist" view of Homer has deep roots in the intellectual history of the last two centuries. It drew strength from Schiller's concept of the "naive" poet, a free spirit who revels childlike in the sheer energies of "Natur" for their own sake. To this romanticization of Homer was added the influence of the Nietzschean glorification of the unmoralized, unChristianized Hellenic world

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[1] For a convenient listing of these grisly scenes see A. Severyns, *Homère*, vol. 3, *L'Artiste* (Brussels 1948) 109-15. See also Oscar R. Sandstrom, *A Study of the Ethical Principles and Practices of Homeric Warfare*, U. of Pennsylvania Diss. (Philadelphia 1924) 57-65, especially 57-9.

[2] Severyns (preceding note) 3.111. See also Ernesto Valgiglio, *Achille, eroe implacabile: Studio psicologico sull' Iliade* (Torino 1956) p. 99 with note 1. Valgiglio is aware of Homer's repugnance toward details of mutilation, but he goes too far perhaps in attempting to excuse or gloze over the violence.

[3] See my review article, "The Achievement of Vergil," *Arion* 4 (1965) 145-7, à propos of Brooks Otis, *Virgil, A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1963).

of liberated demonic energies, a world where man, untroubled by modern anxiety, guilt, self-doubt, stands firm, bold, virile, beyond good and evil.[1]

Now this view of Homer, allowing for certain exaggerations, has a measure of validity. Unquestionably Homer's joy in the violent passions of his heroes and in the vital energies of nature glimpsed in the similes taps the deepest springs of his creative powers. Homer does not moralize and does not gloze over or flinch from the grimmest truths. But he need not openly censure his heroes for their more extreme acts of cruelty in order to indicate that barbarity is taking place and that something valuable in human life is being outraged. A poet who could create a Hector, an Andromache, a Priam does not *simply* share his heroes' exultation in bloodthirsty deeds. The most wantonly cruel of the Greeks in battle is King Agamemnon, and there is no doubt that Homer has deliberately placed this selfish and irresponsible chieftain in an unfavorable and unsympathetic light.[2]

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[1] The anti-Nietzschean view has emerged especially strongly after the Second World War in the conception of the *Iliad* as a "poem of force" which dramatizes not only the degradation of the victim, but that of the agent as well: see Simone Weil, "*L'Iliade* ou le poème de la force," in *La source grecque* (Paris 1953) 11-42; Rachel Bespaloff, *De l'Iliade* (New York 1943) especially 33-40. One may add here Goethe's famous dictim, "The lesson of the *Iliad* is that on this earth we must enact Hell," on which see C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford 1942; "Galaxy Books," 1961) 30-31. Weil's interpretation underlies the essay of Thomas McFarland, "Lykaon and Achilles," *Yale Review*, n.s. 45 (1955-6) 191-213. Characteristic of the romanticizing mood is Tolstoy's letter to Fet (December, 1870): "Soweit ich jetzt bereits beurteilen kann, ist Homer durch unsere Übersetzung nach deutschen Texten nur verunstaltet worden. Ein banaler, aber unwillkürlicher Vergleich: gekochtes destilliertes Wasser und frisches Quellenwasser, das an den Zähnen weh tut, in der Sonne funkelt und sogar Staubkörner sehen lässt, von denen es noch reiner und frischer erscheint. Alle diese Voss und Shukowskis singen mit einer honigsüssen, widerlichen und einschmeichelnden Stimme. Dieser Teufel von Homer aber singt und schreit aus voller Brust, und niemals kommt ihm auch nur der Gedanke, dass jemand ihm zuhören könnte !": cited and discussed by Karl Kerényi, "Homer und die Kämpfer um seinen Gesang," in *Streifzüge eines Hellenisten* (Zürich 1960) 8-9. Tolstoy's last clause is as revealing for the underlying notion of the "naive" and unsophisticated poet, as his "banal comparison" is for the association of Homer and "natural" energies and freedom. On this last see also Thomas Mann, "Anna Karenina" (1939) in *Essays by Thomas Mann*, tr. H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York, "Vintage Books" 1958) 181.

[2] On Agamemnon's bloodthirstiness see Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 335; Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 156ff., especially 159-60; also W.-H. Friedrich, *Verwundung und Tod in der Ilias = Abh. Göttingen*, 3. Folge, 38 (1956) 61.

The *Iliad* is a tale of the ferocity of human passions. Yet gods and men alike in Homer value pity and gentleness. [1] "Pitiless," νηλεής, is a term of reproach. Gentleness and mildness, the qualities of being μείλιχος, ἤπιος, ἀγανός, receive signal recognition. With this prized attribute of gentleness Homer endows three of his most important characters: Priam, Hector, and above all Patroclus (see 17.670-1, 19.300, 24.770, 24.772). At two cardinal junctures of the action, the end of book 11 and the beginning of book 16, Patroclus' compassion is the critical factor. Even Achilles' fierce hatred is the obverse, after all, of his great love. And the object of this love is the gentlest of the warriors in the Greek camp. Something in Achilles could win and hold the friendship of a Patroclus.

One is not surprised to find grieving, helpless women like Briseis or Helen extolling these gentler virtues (see 19.295-300, 24.767-75). Yet even warriors in the heat of battle share such sentiments. Menelaus arouses Meriones and the two Ajaxes for battle with reminders of Patroclus' gentleness (17.669-72):

> Twin Ajaxes, leaders of the Argives, and Meriones, now let a man remember the gentleness (ἐνηείης) of unfortunate Patroclus For he understood how to be kindly (μειλίχος) to all while he lived. But now death and his fate overtake him.

As Homer could introduce the perspectives of his own day into his picture of the material culture of his heroic world, so could he reflect, both directly and indirectly, the moral perspective of his own post-heroic age.[2] The scope of the *Iliad's* sympathies are capacious and generous. It contains two not always totally congruent worlds: that of the heroes and that of the poet. [3]

For the present study, this issue focuses more narrowly on the question of Achilles in the later books. Is his increasing violence merely the execution of a just revenge, or are we to feel an implicit censure of his violence ? There are good arguments on both sides.[4]

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[1] On this subject see in general Sandstrom (above, p. 10, note 1) Chap. 3, "Pity," pp. 22-29, and also 74-76.

[2] See Gilbert Murray's eloquent statement of the influence on the Homeric spirit of the suffering and hardships of the migration period (or what we would now call the collapse of Mycenaean civilization and the advent of the Dark Age) in *The Rise of the Greek Epic*[2] (Oxford 1924) 91. Also Weil (above, p. 11, note 1) 38.

[3] See Severyns (above, p. 10, note 1) 3.158. Further literature in Lesky (above, p. 10, note 1) p. 53, note 2.

[4] In defense of Achilles see Bassett (above, p. 1, note 2) 193ff., with the literature there cited; also, more recently, A. L. Motto and J. R. Clark,

The passages cited above, however, and those to be discussed in greater detail later will, I hope, establish the fact that the exposure and mutilation of a dead warrior's corpse does indeed arouse in Homer repugnance and even some measure of moral outrage. Critics have differed as to whether Achilles' slaughter of the twelve Trojan youths at Patroclus' pyre is to be considered as an outrage or not. Yet 23.176, κακὰ δὲ φρεσὶ μήδετο ἔργα, surely indicates that this act is "explicitly condemned by the poet." [1] Nor does the religious or ritual explanation offered by Erwin Rohde, i.e. the survival here of a primitive worship of the dead and the desire to pacify the ghost of the slain man, account satisfactorily for the degree of Achilles' rage and violence or for what Rohde himself calls "the exaggerated fullness" of Patroclus' obsequies.[2]

When we speak of the values of "Homer" here, of course, we mean Homer as the maker or shaper of the literary construct that is the *Iliad*. From the point of view of the literary criticism of the poem his attitude toward the mutilation of the corpse is a postulate of the action, not a matter of individual belief. Yet the fact remains that this postulate and the emotional and moral values it carries are essential to the poem. The audience, in order to experience the movement toward climax and resolution, must be emotionally involved in the events. The stakes must be something that *matter*. If the mutilation of Hector's corpse were value-neutral, a routine expectation of war, the driving thrust behind the action in the last third of the poem would vanish. At the same time the values implied in this theme, involving as they do basic feelings

"*Isê Dais*: The Honor of Achilles," *Arethusa* 2 (1969) 109-25, especially 115-17. The most eloquent of those on the other side is probably Weil (above, p. 11, note 1) *passim*; see also McFarland (above, p. 11 note 1), especially 203-4; Sandstrom (above, p. 10, note 1) 17. A balanced view is presented by Valgiglio (above, p. 10, note 1), who admits the violence and harshness of Achilles (pp. 64-6, 71, 74ff.), but sees these qualities as part of a tragic destiny of an essentially noble figure.

[1] E. T. Owen, *The Story of the Iliad* (Toronto 1946) 235. See also Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 206, who cites also 22.395, 23.24, 23.176; Valgiglio (above, p. 10, note 2) 99. *Contra*, Bassett (above, p. 1 note 2) 205-6 and his article, "Achilles' Treatment of Hector's Body," *TAPA* 64 (1933) 41-65, *passim*.

[2] Erwin Rohde, *Psyche*^{5}, tr. W. B. Hillis (London 1925) 16 and in general 12-17. Elsewhere too Rohde admits that Homer may be using this motif of the elaborate rituals to the dead for his own special purposes, i.e. "to provide a satisfactory climax to the series of vivid and emotional scenes beginning with the tragic death of Patroklos and ending with the death and dishonouring of the champion of Troy" (p. 14).

of human dignity and human relations, are sufficiently universal (at least in the culture which Homer, after all, has helped to form) that we too, remote as we are from Homer's civilization, can still experience this tension and thus participate fully in the emotion, rhythm, and significance of the narrative.

Samuel Bassett, one of the most eloquent of Achilles' defenders, has argued that the body of an enemy slain in battle is merely the property of his slayer, and no stigma attaches to its maltreatment: ". . . It was entirely in accord with the Homeric code of honor to outrage the body of a foeman . . . in order to avenge the death of a dear friend or kinsman." [1] Bassett cites a number of passages which will be discussed in a later portion of this study, especially in Chapter 4, below. In general, he fails to observe how carefully both the language and the contexts of these passages individualize these scenes of mutilation so that they stand out from the rest of the narrative with something other than epic neutrality. Bassett claims, for example, that in the *Odyssey* the suitors' threats that dogs or vultures will eat the corpse of Eumaeus (21.363-4) or Odysseus (22.30) merely reflect the regular practice of violating the bodies of one's enemies. But in both cases these threats of mutilation are expressive of the lawlessness of the suitors at the very point when they are about to pay the penalty for their reckless violation of established sanctions. In both cases too Homer lays special stress on the rudeness and insolence of the speaker:

ὧδε δέ τις εἴπεσκε νέων ὑπερηνορεόντων (21.361).
νείκειον δ' 'Οδυσῆα χολωτοῖσιν ἐπέεσσι (22.26).

Menelaus' treatment of Aegisthus, "whom dogs and birds devoured lying in the plain far from Argos, nor did any one of the Achaean women lament him" (*Od.* 3.259-61), reveals, according to Bassett, "the great difference between the Heroic Age and the fifth century in the attitude towards the dead enemy." [2] Yet this passage clearly

[1] Bassett, *TAPA* 64 (1933) 54.

[2] *Ibid.*, 49. For just the opposite view see now Manfred Faust, "Die künstlerische Verwendung von κύων, 'Hund,' in den homerischen Epen," *Glotta* 48 (1970) 8-31, especially 22-24. Faust's useful list of passages on dogs and birds unfortunately appeared too late for me to use; but his material, especially from the *Odyssey*, supports my interpretation. In fact all the passages in the *Odyssey* which mention mutilation—with the significant exception of the mutilation of Melanthius in 22.476—are in contexts where there is a marked awareness of cruelty and violence.

describes a very special case. A treacherous adulterer, murderer, regicide hardly stands on the same plane as an heroic warrior killed in open battle. And old Nestor, to make his didactic point even more clearly (for he is, after all, indirectly instructing the young Telemachus in the values of heroic society) explains at once the reason for this especially harsh treatment (3.261): μάλα γὰρ μέγα μήσατο ἔργον.

Bassett's arguments in this matter suffer from the danger of confusing Achilles' justification in *killing* Hector with the question of his excesses in treating the body of the slain Hector as he does. The aura of Christian purity attaching to the warrior of medieval chivalry can mislead us into a blind defense of Homer's very different type of hero. It does not aid our interpretation of the *Iliad* to regard Achilles as "the knight *sans peur et sans reproche* of the Greek Heroic age." [1]

The relevant issue may not be whether or not Achilles could have acted otherwise, but what is the meaning of a situation or a world-order which can call forth the most savage brutality along with the noblest devotion and generosity. In defining and sharpening the tragic polarities of this situation the horror of mutilation plays an important role.

Even the fact that the mutilation of an enemy's corpse is "legally" justified as a practice of war does not make it the less horrible. Creon, we may recall, was legally justified in exposing the body of Polyneices. The verb which describes the action of mutilation, ἀεικίζειν, in itself offers a clue: it is related to the adjective ἀεικής which often carries a moral connotation of excessive, unsanctioned violence. It is the word used in the *Odyssey* to describe the machinations of Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra.[2]

Yet it would be mistaken to maintain simply that Homer censures Achilles' behavior in the later books. Achilles' hatred and bitterness are humanly intelligible, even pitiable, though they do not permit as full an exoneration of his actions as some scholars

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[1] Bassett, *TAPA* 64, 65 and also 59-60 ("a true knight of the Greek Heroic Age"; "the prime of manhood in the days of Greek knighthood").

[2] *Od.* 3.265 and 11.429. See *Il.* 4.396, 11.142, 19.133. The word also has a strong moral note in *Il.* 9.70, 15.496, 19.124. Cf. also *Od.* 16.107 = 20.317; 20.394 = 22.432. See the discussion in A. W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility* (Oxford 1960) 41-5, especially 43: "In all cases where *ergon aeikes* refers to a defeat, military or social, it is the person who 'performed' the *ergon aeikes* who is discredited . . ." Bassett's discussion, *TAPA* 64 (1933) 44-6 is unsatisfactory.

would grant.[1] We need to look not only to the character of Achilles, but also to the perspective of the entire poem, which involves far more than Achilles. Homer can be φιλαχιλλεύς, as the ancient commentators thought, while still being realistic—and humanely realistic—about the destructive force of the passions which burst forth from this hero at the loss of his beloved friend. By giving instances of previous generosity and compassion in Achilles, Homer shows us a falling off from a higher level of humanity which may itself constitute part of the atmosphere of tragic loss surrounding him.[2] Gentle though he can be, Achilles is caught up in the violence of war more fully and more passionately than any other hero. The tragedy is not his alone, though he is at its center.[3] It is part of the tragedy of the human condition portrayed by Homer that human passions—the greed of Agamemnon, the love and intensity of Achilles, the patriotism and social sense of Hector—lead to unexpected disasters of a magnitude far beyond what the original action intended or deserved.

Immersed in the total destructiveness of war, Achilles' passionate nature, open to all the extremes of experience, will carry this violence to its furthest possible point.[4] Such a man, caught in a situation not entirely of his own making, may find what is most precious in his life shattered and what is noblest in himself turned to bitterness and hatred. Thus the intensest love portrayed in the poem

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[1] E. g. Bassett (above, p. 1, note 2) 203-7. See also above, p. 12, note 4.

[2] See especially McFarland (above, p. 11, note 1), who sees Achilles as dying a kind of spiritual death in the later books: "But Achilles, who in life had known so well the uses of magnanimity, has no soul left to accomplish the return of Hector's body" (212). On Eetion and Achilles' generosity see Owen (above, p. 13, note 1) 230; Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 189 and 198; Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 335, with the passages cited in his notes 5-7 on pp. 473-4; also J. W. Zarker, "King Eëtion and Thebe as Symbols in the *Iliad*," *CJ* 61 (1965-6) 110-14; Sandstrom (above, p. 10, note 1) 62.

[3] See Owen (above, p. 13, note 1) 247-8.

[4] For these extremes of emotionality in Achilles see Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 334ff., who sees him as "die schmerzensreichste" figure in Homer, with a far greater capacity for suffering than "much-enduring" Odysseus (p. 336). Valgiglio (above, p. 10, note 2) 100 calls Achilles "l'eroe delle passioni gigantesche." See also Owen (above, p. 13, note 1) 208-9, Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 187, Van der Valk (above, p. 1, note 2) 7-8. The special intensity of Achilles' soul reflects itself in his language also: see the fine observations of Adam Parry, "The Language of Achilles," *TAPA* 87 (1956) 1-7 = G. S. Kirk, ed., *The Language and Background of Homer* (Cambridge 1964) 48-54; also Seth Benardete, "Achilles and the *Iliad*," *Hermes* 91 (1963) 14-16.

(Achilles' for Patroclus) finds expression only in scenes of relentless killing and unconsolable lamentation. Achilles is himself as much a victim of the war as Hector or Priam. He himself curses his Wrath (18.107-11), as he curses even the war itself (16.98-101). Yet sympathy for him need not exclude the just assessment of his responsibility in deepening the tragedy. His justification in seeking the fullest vengeance for Patroclus' death does not make the sufferings of his victims any less moving. On the other hand, at the very end, even after the cessation of Achilles' wrath, there is still violence on the Trojan side (see 24.756 and below, Chapter VII). Homer's refusal to localize the savagery on one side only expresses the comprehensiveness of his vision of war and of the human condition which war in the *Iliad* both symbolizes and reveals.

Homer does not glory in elaborate descriptions of grisly details of mutilation for their own sake. Again and again he devotes his greatest art to portraying the agony of the father, mother, wife of the warrior whose corpse is threatened with exposure.[1] He is careful to place Hector's death beyond the sight of Priam or Hecuba on the wall, and (unlike Virgil) he never describes the death of a son before a parent's eyes.[2] This attention to the reactions of the victims helps us understand in what light we are to regard the corpse theme.

It is the same with the battle scenes throughout the poem. Homer does not describe wounds as an end in itself. He is always aware of the concrete human reality and the human suffering involved: the victim's peaceful life in his homeland before the war, the grief of a surviving parent, the bereavement of a newly married wife. On the two occasions in the *Iliad* where Zeus feels personal grief and concern for an endangered warrior, it is a Trojan, and not a Greek, who moves him to pity (16.431ff., 22.167ff.)

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[1] Friedrich (above, p. 11, note 2) 100 notes, for example, in the Lycaon episode "jenes entwickelte Interesse für innertroische, familiäre Angelegenheiten, das uns die Simoeisios, Skamandrios and Imbrios so nahe brachte." See also Van der Valk (above, p. 1, note 2) pp. 30-31. with note 80.

[2] See Bassett (above, p. 1, note 2) 36, with note 13 on p. 248. In one place, however, Homer does briefly allude to a husband killed before the eyes of a wife: 19.291f., of Briseis. See also Murray (above, p. 12, note 2) 126ff., who observes (perhaps overoptimistically) Homer's "expurgations of divers cruel or barbarous practices."

CHAPTER THREE

PRELUDE: BOOKS 16-20

The theme of the mutilation of the corpse serves almost as a barometer of the rising violence stirred by Achilles' Wrath. The references to mutilation in the first two-thirds of the *Iliad* are scattered and not grouped into a specific pattern. The killing of Patroclus in book 16 introduces the more intense and systematic development of the corpse theme, and this intensity continues to the end of the poem.

Sarpedon, as he entreats Glaucus' help with his dying breath, mentions the corpse theme for the first time in the Patrocleia. Sarpedon will be a source of shame and reproach to his comrades "if the Achaeans strip off my armor when I have fallen where the ships are gathered" (16.499-500). His language here is neutral, and there is no reference to mutilation. But, as the tempo of the battle increases, Glaucus adds a new detail. He appeals to Hector and the Trojans to protect the body "lest the Myrmidons take away the armor and outrage the corpse" (μὴ ἀπὸ τεύχε' ἕλωνται, ἀεικίσσωσι δὲ νεκρὸν / Μυρμιδόνες, 16.545-6). It is no longer a question of just the "armor." Here the verb ἀεικίζειν occurs for the first time in the *Iliad*. It is to recur frequently in the coming books.

Glaucus' fears are speedily confirmed. A few lines later Patroclus expresses the hope that they may "outrage" the body and strip off the armor (16.559-61):

> ἀλλ' εἴ μιν ἀεικισσαίμεθ' ἑλόντες,
> τεύχεά τ' ὤμοιιν ἀφελοίμεθα, καί τιν' ἑταίρων
> αὐτοῦ ἀμυνομένων δαμασαίμεθα νηλέϊ χαλκῷ.

Even in the short space of fifteen lines the violence has intensified. Patroclus puts the "outraging" before the "stripping," adds the energetic ἑλόντες and the graphic ὤμοιιν, and would kill Sarpedon's companions "with pitiless bronze." The formula νηλέϊ χαλκῷ makes an appropriate close to this grim little speech. Directly afterwards Zeus sends the "destructive night" (νύκτ' ὀλοὴν 16.567) which settles over the battlefield until late in the next book, a

sign of the murderous and murky atmosphere of this battle.[1] To underline the point he uses the adjective "destructive" again in the next line (μάχης ὀλοὸς πόνος, 16.568).

With Sarpedon, however, the mutilation theme does not yet reach its full violence. The gods arrange for Sleep and Death to spirit the body away to his homeland, Lycia (16.453-7, 668-83). The harshness of mutilation yields to Zeus' reassuring, calm certainty that Sarpedon will obtain the full rites of burial (16.674-5):

> ἔνθα ἑ ταρχύσουσι κασίγνητοί τε ἔται τε
> τύμβῳ τε στήλῃ τε· τὸ γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ θανόντων.

The threat of the mutilation of Patroclus' corpse, however, is not softened by any such divine interference. Lacking the remoteness of Lycia and the dimension of the imaginary introduced by the figures of Sleep and Death in the Sarpedon episode, the mutilation theme for Patroclus is grimmer and more serious.

As in the case of Sarpedon, the initial statement of the theme is low-keyed. Hector boasts over the fallen Patroclus, σὲ δέ τ' ἐνθάδε γῦπες ἔδονται (16.836). The sentence comes in the exact center of his speech (the seventh line in a thirteen-line statement). Though cruel enough, it does not contain any of the grisly details with which the theme is often handled (e.g. 8.379f. = 13.831f. and see *supra*). Where γῦπες ἔδονται ends the hexameter elsewhere, in fact, there is reference to "tender flesh" (4.237) or to dogs as well as vultures (18.271 and 22.42). The savagery of Hector, nevertheless, is gratuitous. It reflects both his deluded boastfulness (compare 13.824-32) and the intensification of the savagery of the battle in general.

The action of the previous book has provided some preparation for this violence. There, at the furthest point of Trojan success, the burning of the ship of Protesilaus (15.704ff.), Hector had threatened his companions with instant death and rending by dogs (15.349-51):

> οὐδέ νυ τόν γε
> γνωτοί τε γνωταί τε πυρὸς λελάχωσι θανόντα,
> ἀλλὰ κύνες ἐρύουσι πρὸ ἄστεος ἡμετέροιο.

How we are to evaluate this threat is made clear shortly thereafter when Hector utters presumptuous and false statements about the purposes of Zeus (15.490-3; cf. 610-14). He appears "raging"

[1] Cf. especially 17.643-50 and in general Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 161-3.

(μαίνετο, 15.605) like Ares or like a destructive fire, foaming at the mouth, eyes flashing, his helmet ringing about his temples (15.605-10). His threat to the fallen Patroclus in 16.836, then, is a natural extension of that threat and that yielding to the intoxicating savagery of the war in book 15. It also demarcates another step toward that total loss of civilized restraints as the fury of the battlefield runs its course.

In the fighting of the next book (17) the mutilation theme flares suddenly into new prominence. First Euphorbus, one of the slayers of Patroclus, threatens Menelaus not only with stripping off his armor, but also with decapitation (17.39-40). Decapitation is an especially ugly step in this downward spiralling of the violence.[1] It first appears in the *Iliad* as a remote possibility, a figure of speech almost, when Pandarus utters an imprecation of ἐξώλεια in his anger and frustration at the ineffectiveness of his marksmanship (5.214-16). It recurs elsewhere as a gruesome detail in the heat of battle (e.g. 14.498), but it is not threatened as a punishment to a fallen enemy before book 17. In several of the scenes of decapitation, Homer clearly marks this action as extraordinarily brutal and repugnant, notably in the killing of Dolon (10.455-7), in Agamemnon's bloodthirsty *aristeia* 11. 146-7, 261),[2] and in Achilles' relentless cutting down of fleeing Trojans (20.481-3). In the first two of these four passages Homer magnifies the horror of decapitation by combining it with the killing of a helpless suppliant. Closer to our passage, Peneleos in 16.339-41 strikes Lycon in the neck and leaves the head hanging only by the skin.[3] It was this same Peneleos who carried off his enemy's head, struck through the eye, like a poppy-head on his spear in 14.492-500.[4] Euphorbus himself who makes this threat of decapitation here in book

[1] On decapitation see Friedrich (above, p. 11, note 2) 57-9; Bernard Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad* = *Hermes Einzelschriften* 21 (1968), p. 15 note 11 and p. 84.

[2] See the passages cited in the previous note.

[3] The curious nature of 16.339-50 is noted by Friedrich (above p. 11, note 2) 27-8: "Diese groteske Spielart des Grässlichen ist selbst in der blutrünstigen Patroklie ungewöhnlich und sticht denn auch aus ihrer näheren Umgebung hervor. Falls sie nicht an den Personen als solchen hängt, so hängt sie doch mit der Verbindung von Peneleos und Idomeneus zusammen . . ." Yet this passage is not only characteristic of Peneleos, but is also to be seen as part of that building up of the theme of mutilation which gains in intensity gradually from the latter third of book 16.

[4] It is to Peneleos, says Severyns (above, p. 10, note 1) 3.113 "que revient la palme du macabre."

17 appears in none too favorable a light. He is an overconfident young upstart, who, decked out in his "barbarischen Üppigkeit" (17.51-2) and freshly arrived (16.811), finds the grimness of war something of a game.[1] His lucky hit at Patroclus brings out an overweening boastfulness (ὑπέρβιον εὐχετάασθαι, 17.19), which in itself prepares for his threat of decapitation in 17.39ff. and forms the appropriately pejorative context for it.[2]

The savagery of decapitation soon moves from Euphorbus to Hector himself. After stripping off Patroclus' armor he tries to seize the body "in order that he might cut off the head from the shoulders and drag the corpse to give to the dogs of Troy" (17. 125-7):

> Ἕκτωρ μὲν Πάτροκλον ἐπεὶ κλυτὰ τεύχε' ἀπηύρα,
> ἕλχ', ἵν' ἀπ' ὤμοιιν κεφαλὴν τάμοι ὀξέϊ χαλκῷ,
> τὸν δὲ νέκυν Τρῳῇσιν ἐρυσσάμενος κυσὶ δοίη.

The language is still formulaic; and the formulas do their work of creating an atmosphere of endless, accumulating horror and all-encompassing cruelty. The references to severing the head "from the shoulders," the "sharp bronze," and the "dogs of Troy," however, begin to tighten the screw to a pitch beyond the less elaborate formulations of 16.836 or 17.39-40.

After Hector's reported threat of 17.126-8 the danger of the mutilation of Patroclus' corpse remains at a constant peak of intensity for the rest of the battle. Glaucus entreats Hector not to allow the body of Sarpedon to become "a prey to the Greeks" or to dogs (17.153), and we recall Glaucus' similar plea in book 16 (538-47) and the introduction of the "outrage" theme there (ἀεικίσσωσι δὲ νεκρόν, 16.545). The threat of "Trojan dogs" (Hector's indirectly reported words in 17.127) recurs several times in the early part of the book (17.241, 254f., 272f.). The last of these passages has a special vividness. The phrase "Trojan dogs" acquires an unusual possessive genitive, δηΐων[3]; and "Trojan" is enjambed, an effect which underlines the bitter enmity between the two peoples (δηΐων κυσὶ κύρμα γενέσθαι/Τρῳῇσιν, 17.272f.).

[1] Friedrich (above, p. 11, note 2) 58.

[2] The whole of this passage is a fine instance of Homer's "objectivity" and inclusive sympathy: despite the implicit criticism of Euphorbus, the fine simile of 17.53ff. intensifies the pathos of the death of a young man. Note too the contrast with the simile of the savage lion crunching a cow's neck in his jaws in the simile shortly thereafter (17.61ff.)

[3] See Walter Leaf, ed., *The Iliad*² (London 1900-2) *ad loc.*

Finally, in 17.557-8 Athena reproaches Menelaus with the shame of leaving Patroclus' body to be torn by "swift dogs":

εἴ κ' Ἀχιλῆος ἀγαυοῦ πιστὸν ἑταῖρον
τείχει ὕπο Τρώων ταχέες κύνες ἑλκήσουσιν.[1]

The juxtaposition of the phrase "Achilles' faithful companion" (πιστὸν ἑταῖρον) with the details of mutilation in the next line illustrates Homer's skill in the fresh combination of familiar formulaic elements.[2] The juxtaposition focuses attention on what will be Achilles' reaction to this situation, a point which will be developed as the substance of the next book. It is also interesting that it is now a god, not a mortal character, who urges the defense of the corpse (cf. 16. 538-47, 17.151-3), a change which may also reflect the intensification of the corpse theme and the expansion of its violence.

Book 18 carries the mutilation theme to Achilles himself. Significantly, it here receives another sudden boost in intensity. Iris secretly visits Achilles and reports that Hector intends not merely to seize the body, but to fasten the head upon a pike (18.175-77):

μάλιστα δὲ φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ
ἑλκέμεναι μέμονεν· κεφαλὴν δέ ἑ θυμὸς ἄνωγε
πῆξαι ἀνὰ σκολόπεσσι ταμόνθ' ἁπαλῆς ἀπὸ δειρῆς.

The juxtaposition of ταμόνθ' and ἁπαλῆς in the last line gives the description a gory vividness.[3] But even more remarkable is the threat itself. It does not matter whether these σκόλοπες refer to a stake (poetic plural) or to "palisades" (presumably on the Trojan wall rather than at the ditch).[4] In either case the degree of brutality is extraordinary. If one may judge by classical Greek literature, it would be felt as especially shocking.[5] There is nothing else quite

[1] Dogs are often "swift" in Homer; but that quality may have a special appropriateness for the rending of the corpse, suggesting the quick darting movements of the scavengers as they fight over their prey. See also 18.283, 22.89, and 24.211 and the further discussion of these passages in their proper place.

[2] We may add that 17.557 is the only place in the *Iliad* where the phrase Ἀχιλῆος ἀγαυοῦ occurs, though Achilles receives this epithet also in 10.392.

[3] Cf. the similar effect in the phrase χρόα λειριόεντα of 13.830.

[4] See Leaf (above, p. 21, note 3) *ad loc.*

[5] See, for example, Aesch. *Eumen.* 186; Hdt. 6.30.1 and 9.78.3; Eurip. *El.* 897-8, *Rhes.* 512-15, and G. Kaibel, *Sophokles Elektra* (Leipzig 1896) 298-9. See also Murray (above, p. 12, note 2) 128-9, who notes the suggestion of J. A. K. Thomson that in the "original" story Achilles actually did cut off Hector's head.

like it in the *Iliad*. The closest parallel occurs in 14.496-500 where Peneleos holds a decapitated head on his spear "like the head of a poppy." But this action occurs in the heat of battle and without prior meditation, nor is the spear quite a pike or stake. More important, Peneleos has not deliberately impaled the head: it is on his spear because the victim has already been struck through the eye (14.493-5). The action is gruesome to a high degree, but it does not belong in quite the same category as our passage.[1] Thus our passage not only climaxes the motif of decapitation initiated by Euphorbus at the beginning of book 17, but it also outlines a new stage in the violent treatment of the dead, a new level of atrocity which is now attained. When in book 7 Hector issued a general challenge to the Greek army, he proposed the generous restoration of the body of his slain opponent (7.76-91). He even made a special point of the honors which the returned corpse will receive (7.79-80, 85-6). Twelve books later he utters one of the cruelest threats of the entire *Iliad*. This threat of book 18 also connects this new stage with Achilles, the hero who is actually to execute a threat of this magnitude of violence, not merely contemplate it.

It is interesting that Homer gives no other evidence for this thought of impalement by Hector. Hera has sent Iris to Achilles, as she sent Athena to him in 1.195. But here Homer adds a special feature to Iris' visit: she comes "without the knowledge of Zeus and the other gods" (κρύβδα Διὸς ἄλλων τε θεῶν, 18.168). Homer does not elsewhere confirm this rather dubious authority for such an intention on Hector's part, nor does Hector ever utter such a threat in direct discourse. Indeed, a later passage also suggests grounds for questioning whether Iris' statement is to be taken at its face value.[2] After Achilles has mourned over the body and vowed

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[1] In the other place in the *Iliad* where an already slain and stripped corpse is beheaded, there is a special degree of violence and emotionality: Oilean Ajax, angry over the death of Amphimachus, cuts off the head and hurls it like a ball at Hector's feet (13.202-5). This passage, in fact, anticipates on a microcosmic scale the action of books 16-22: a companion is killed (13.185-7); his body is recovered only after a battle (13.188-96); and the corpse of the killer is horribly mutilated in revenge (13.202-5). This passage is a valuable illustration of how the mutilation theme can play a relatively minor role, on the one hand, as a decorative motif in a battle scene and, on the other, be expanded into the main substance of the action for many books.

[2] Friedrich (above, p. 11, note 2) 57 has noted how striking this passage is: "Dass Hektor diese Absicht zugeschrieben wird, muss uns deswegen

to sacrifice the twelve Trojan youths, Zeus upbraids the savage and partisan Hera for her part in "rousing Achilles" (18.357-9):

> ἔπρηξας καὶ ἔπειτα, βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη,
> ἀνστήσασ' Ἀχιλῆα πόδας ταχύν· ἦ ῥά νυ σεῖο
> ἐξ αὐτῆς ἐγένοντο κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοί.

The important thing, however, is not the truth or falsity of Iris' message, but the fact that Homer presents this extraordinary threat of 176ff. in a context which maximizes the impact on Achilles and minimizes the importance of Hector's actual intentions. The contemplated outrage is a reflection on *Achilles'* present and future states of mind. Hence it is presented solely from the point of view of Achilles and is even shrouded in the privacy of this secret embassy from Hera. Achilles is once more coming into the foreground of the action. Hector's actual intentions are, in a sense, irrelevant. Possibly too, though here we are admittedly in the realm of speculation, Iris' message can be understood as intimating anxieties, exaggerated fears, wild imaginings in Achilles' own mind, that inner reservoir of savagery awaiting release. But in any case the passage raises to a new level the unrestrained violence which is soon to burst forth from Achilles and vent itself on Hector's corpse.

Achilles has received a private visitor from the gods, also at Hera's request, in the past too, i.e. Athena in book 1 (cf. 1.195). That Hera-sent emissary came to "still his wrath" and to "put an end to strife" (1.207ff.). It is a sign of the change in Achilles' mood and in the tenor of the action as a whole that Hera's messenger now comes with exactly the opposite purpose. And, like Athena in book 1, she succeeds in her mission.

Iris is careful to couch her appeal in the most effective possible terms. Not only does she evoke the horrible picture of Patroclus' head on a pike, but she connects the mutilation theme directly with the honor of Achilles himself. She appeals for σέβας and warns of the insult to Achilles "if the corpse comes to (him) disfigured" (σοὶ λώβη, αἴ κέν τι νέκυς ᾐσχυμμένος ἔλθῃ, 18.180). Her

befremden, weil ihm, der doch unermüdlich kämpfte und tötete, bisher keine auffallenden Greueltaten nachgesagt worden waren." See also Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 203-4. Evidence of early difficulty with the passage is suggested also by the text of Zenodotus, who placed these lines not in Iris' speech, but in the heat of the battle still raging over Patroclus in 155ff. See Leaf (above, p. 21, note 3) *ad* 18.154. For a different view see Bassett, *TAPA* 64 (1933) 51.

word ᾐσχυμμένος aims directly at the values of the Homeric warrior and his "shame culture." [1] Her speech makes the entreaty that Patroclus himself might have made to Achilles if he had been on the battlefield (cf. Sarpedon's plea in 5.684-8 or Glaucus' in 16.538-47 and 17.142-68). Menelaus had made a similar plea on Patroclus' behalf in the battle over the corpse earlier (17.254-5):

νεμεσιζέσθω δ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ
Πάτροκλον Τρῳῇσι κυσὶν μέλπηθρα γενέσθαι.

Through the formulaic repetition (17.255=18.179) the intensity of Patroclus' need is now brought home to Achilles. The urgency of the battle scene, with the corpse lying between opposing warriors, begins to touch Achilles himself. Yet in Achilles' case this familiar cry to rescue the corpse from maltreatment receives the new and nonformulaic addition of 18.180, with its strong and emotive value words, λώβη and ᾐσχυμμένος.

The language of 18.180 also has a special relevance to Achilles' situation and to the context of this passage. The phrasing of the line, "if the body comes disfigured," looks ahead to the actual recovery of the body. Thus it prepares for the next scene, i.e. for Achilles' reaction when the body actually has "come" to him out of the battle and when his reaction to that mangled corpse "lying on the bier" before him (18.236) fills the foreground. The language of line 180 is unique in the development of the mutilation theme. It is a good example of the flexibility of the Homeric style, which can blend the new with the familiar and can rise to precise and unusual diction for a critical and unique occasion.

How fully the corpse theme expresses the complexity of Achilles' character appears from the scene, a little later, when Achilles receives the body of Patroclus back from the battle. First Homer shows us Achilles' tenderness as he weeps "warm tears" over the torn body, κείμενον ἐν φέρτρῳ δεδαϊγμένον ὀξέϊ χαλκῷ (18.236).[2] The phrase δάκρυα θερμὰ χέων carries overtones of compassion and commiseration from the beginning of the book. Antilochus was "weeping warm tears" as he reported to Achilles the "grievous

[1] For *aischron* and Homeric values see Adkins (above, p. 15, note 2) 33ff. For the Homeric "shame-culture," see E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1951, reprint Boston 1957) chap. 2.

[2] For the careful balance in 18.236 see Edwards (above, p. 1, note 2) 274. See also his remarks on the unusual separation of noun from epithet in ποδώκης εἴπετ' Ἀχιλλεύς, 18.234 (pp. 273-4).

message" of Patroclus' death (δάκρυα θερμὰ χέων, φάτο δ' ἀγγελίην ἀλεγεινήν, 18.17). Even more significant is the echo of the beginning of Patroclus' fatal involvement in the battle: he wept such tears at the beginning of book 16 as he persuaded Achilles to send him forth with the Myrmidons (16.3).[1] There Achilles was deeply moved and granted the request. Now that evocation of Achilles' tenderness only intensifies his hatred toward Hector and the Trojans.

This use of a recurrent phrase in three such dramatic and closely related contexts provides a good example of how formulaic repetition can function to provide a sense of accumulating suffering building toward a climax. The formula δάκρυα θερμὰ χέων occurs nowhere else in the *Iliad* at the beginning of the verse, save that in the plural it describes the grief of the Trojans as they silently collect their dead in 7.426. This passage too, though not connected with Achilles' grief, is concerned with the pain of lamentation over the dead and is characterized by a high degree of pathos.[2]

It would have been natural to continue at once with Achilles' lament. But instead Homer interrupts this continuity and proceeds to give a description of a debate among the Trojans (243-314).[3] Polydamas warns Hector of the danger of remaining in the plain now that Achilles has returned to the fighting. His speech contains two references to the mutilation theme. First he warns that "dogs and vultures will eat many of the Trojans" (πολλοὺς δὲ κύνες καὶ γῦπες ἔδονται / Τρώων, 18.271-2).[4] Then, in a more confident mood,

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[1] Patroclus' weeping here, in turn, points back to another cardinal moment of crisis and receives therewith a further distinctive embellishment in that he weeps "like a dark-watered spring," a phrase used of Agamemnon in 9.14-5 (Agamemnon, however, does not weep "warm" tears, and perhaps there is significance in this). On the relationship between these passages see Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 281-2.

[2] See the famous comment on this passage by Lessing in *Laokoon*, chap 1. and the good discussion by Benardete (above, p. 16, note 4) 8-12.

[3] The abruptness is, of course, due in part to Homer's way of presenting simultaneous action ("Zielinski's law"): see Bassett (above, p. 1, note 2) 34ff. But even so, there was no necessity given in the plot that required Homer to shift the focus to the Trojans at this point. See the apt comment by Owen (above, p. 13 note 1) 185: "As the Trojans in the infatuated mood inspired by Hector's words prepare their supper round the fires in the plain, we hear, as they do, the sound of lamentation for the dead Patroclus rise threateningly from Achilles' camp (314-315), and Achilles' vow of vengeance (333-342) answers Hector's proud words,"

[4] Bassett (above, p. 1, note 2) 274 finds the runover Τρώων "odd" and Leaf (above, p. 21, note 3) *ad loc.* thinks that "the emphatic position of Τρώων. . . by no means corresponds to the importance of the word." But the emphasis

he ends his speech with the assertion that Achilles will not sack the city: "Swift dogs will eat him first" (πρίν μιν κύνες ἀργοὶ ἔδονται, 18.283). There is an interesting movement from the familiar formula of line 271 to the less common phrasing of line 283 (κύνες ἀργοί in this verse-position only here in the *Iliad*).[1] Possibly the less common formula reflects the increasing emotional intensity as Polydamas warms to his confidence in Trojan prowess and thinks with vivid satisfaction of Achilles' corpse in Trojan hands.

Polydamas' talk of dogs and vultures, however, is all in the realm of the hypothetical. His phrases are almost rhetorical figures. But they acquire ominous overtones in the light of Iris' speech of 18.176-80 and in the light of Patroclus' torn body, the spur to Achilles' hatred, in 18.236. The audience, who knows the terrible fate awaiting Hector, will therefore feel a special irony and pathos in Hector's foolish rejection of Polydamas' good advice immediately afterwards (18.295ff.) and in his rash statement that he will face down Achilles in battle (18.305-9). Polydamas' forecast of dogs eating Trojans (271) is to prove truer than that of dogs eating Achilles (283), and these prognostications of mutilation will soon pertain to Hector himself. The foreshadowing is confirmed in the editorializing conclusion (18.310-11):

> ὣς Ἕκτωρ ἀγόρευ', ἐπὶ δὲ Τρῶες κελάδησαν,
> νήπιοι· ἐκ γάρ σφεων φρένας εἵλετο Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη.

When we return to Achilles' grief and violence in 314-42, it becomes clear why Homer has interrupted the natural flow of the action from the recovery of Patroclus' body in 18.231-8 to Achilles' lament over it here in 18.314-42. The interruption interweaves Hector's rashness with Achilles' violence. Achilles and Hector are thus brought into an implicit confrontation which anticipates the actual confrontation which will occur in book 22. We glimpse in advance the essential attitudes of the opponents in that confrontation: Achilles' implacable hatred and Hector's deluded hopes of victory.[2] The corpse theme, then, with its forebodings of the calamity

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may be justified if the point lies in the contrast between the mutilation of Trojan and Achaean corpses. The mutilation of *Trojan* corpses, and not the boasted mutilation of Achilles' corpse in 283, will emerge as the greater reality.

[1] The epithet ἀργοί occurs only here of dogs in the mutilation theme, though cf. also 1.50 and 18.578; also 24.211, discussed below, Chapter VII.

[2] For Hector's delusion see Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 301-3 and the passages there cited; Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 208-12. For a different view see Paolo Vivante, *The Homeric Imagination* (Bloomington, Ind. 1970) 44-5.

awaiting Hector, serves as a focal point for the full violence soon to be unleashed.

The two scenes (18.243-314 and 314-42) initiate another contrast. The reality of the torn corpse of Patroclus (18.236) contrasts with Polydamas' imagined desecration of the corpses of the Trojans and Achilles (271,283). Patroclus' corpse is on a stretcher or bier (κείμενον ἐν φέρτρῳ, 236) and will receive the proper rites; Polydamas' picture of dogs and birds devouring Trojans (18.271) will become only too real in books 21 and 22.

Achilles' lament over Patroclus brings that latent contrast into the light. He introduces for the first time the contrast between his contemplated outrage of Hector's body and the elaborate burial of Patroclus (18.334-5):

> οὔ σε πρὶν κτεριῶ, πρίν γ' Ἕκτορος ἐνθάδ' ἐνεῖκαι
> τεύχεα καὶ κεφαλήν, μεγαθύμου σοῖο φονῆος.

And he continues with the details of Patroclus' funeral in 336-42. He will bring to Patroclus not just Hector's armor, but his head as well (335). He thus takes up the theme of decapitation and builds it into the new level of violence which is here reached. But that violence and the mutilation theme in general have now gained a new focus: Achilles' treatment of Hector's corpse.

With this contrast between the respective treatment of the two corpses the emphasis of the outrage theme shifts from Patroclus to Hector. This theme remains somewhat in the background in the camp and battle scenes of books 19-21, but it emerges with new force in book 22. From that point on Homer centers our attention on two questions: how will Hector die, and what fate awaits his corpse.

Books 19-21, nevertheless, by no means lose sight of the mutilation theme. At the beginning of book 19 Achilles expresses his fear that flies may enter Patroclus' wounds, beget maggots, and thus "defile the corpse" (ἀεικίσσωσι δὲ νεκρόν, 19.26). The language is unusually vivid (19.23-7):

> νῦν δ' ἤτοι μὲν ἐγὼ θωρήξομαι· ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἰνῶς
> δείδω μή μοι τόφρα Μενοιτίου ἄλκιμον υἱὸν
> μυῖαι καδδῦσαι κατὰ χαλκοτύπους ὠτειλὰς
> εὐλὰς ἐγγείνωνται, ἀεικίσσωσι δὲ νεκρόν—
> ἐκ δ' αἰὼν πέφαται—κατὰ δὲ χρόα πάντα σαπήῃ.

This is the first of the three times in the *Iliad* that worms are mentioned in the desecration of a corpse. Andromache, as we shall see, expresses similar fears for Hector's body (22.509f.); and Apollo is to do for Hector's body what Thetis does for Patroclus' (24.18-20, 414-15; cf. 23.188-91 and 19.29-33). Achilles' speech of 19.23ff., therefore, begins to develop the parallelism and contrast between the two corpses on other lines.

This speech of Achilles begins to extend the theme of ἀεικίζειν or "outrage" into another dimension. It is not just man's violation of a corpse which is now at issue, as in books 16-18, but the "violation" which comes through the natural processes of decomposition to which all flesh is heir. So far Homer has used ἀεικίζειν to describe men "outraging" a corpse. Now the range of "outrage" expands to include nature. Apollo in book 24 will also use the word ἀεικίζειν to include both disfigurement by men or animals or the natural processes of putrefaction (24.19). This shift of emphasis in the corpse theme points ahead to the universalization of the conception of death in book 24 and to the vision of a common mortal fate as a potential source of unifying compassion among men. But hitherto the corpses of Hector and Patroclus and the question of their proper funeral or disfigurement are only the source of the most bitter and divisive hatred between the two sides.

If the awareness of the universal processes of life and man's subjection to them is ultimately to create a unifying sympathy bridging the gulf between Greek and Trojan, that awareness is not yet present here. Achilles' clause, ἀεικίσσωσι δὲ νεκρόν recalls the battle which destroyed Patroclus (19.26=16.545). That passage in book 16 initiated the outrage theme in this section of the poem. Achilles makes a parenthetic addition directly after this clause: ἐκ δ' αἰὼν πέφαται (19.27). These words throw us back from the larger perspective of nature's processes of decay here to the harsh violence of the battlefield. This parenthesis reminds us also of the man who did the killing (πέφαται), and is another reminder therefore of Achilles' violence in the midst of his tender concern.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BATTLE IN THE RIVER

Iris' speech to Achilles in 18.175-7 and Achilles' brief remarks of 18.334-5 provide intimations of the violence of the mutilation theme in the coming books. Hector's death is the culmination of that violence, but it is preceded by the battle in the river in book 21. The mutilation theme is especially prominent here and forms an essential part of that progression into increasing savagery which we have seen in the narrative since book 16. Achilles gloats over the refusal of proper burial to his enemies. This motif occurs elsewhere too (cf. 11.452-5, 15.349-51); but in the later books, as it begins to focus on Hector, it gains in pathos and grimness. "Your mother will not put you upon the bier and lament over you," Achilles tells Lycaon, "but the whirling Scamander will bear you to the sea's broad bosom" (21.123-5).[1] He goes on to speak with grim relish of the fish devouring the "shiny fat" (ἀργέτα δημόν) of Lycaon's body (21.126-7):

> θρῴσκων τις κατὰ κῦμα μέλαιναν φρῖχ' ὑπαΐξει
> ἰχθύς, ὅς κε φάγῃσι Λυκάονος ἀργέτα δημόν.

The detail of the fish rippling the surface of the water adds a gruesome specificity. The phrase "shiny fat" occurs in one other place in the *Iliad*, also in connection with mutilation: it is when Patroclus cries out in agonized compassion and concern for the Greek leaders in 11.818.[2] In both cases the phrase adds special intensity and vividness, but for very different purposes. Patroclus' gentleness and pity have become the gall of the raging Achilles.

A little later Achilles kills Asteropaeus and leaves the body lying in the sand. "This the eels and fishes attended to, pulling and tearing off the fat about the kidneys" (21.203-4):

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[1] McFarland (above, p. 11, note 1) 191 calls the Lycaon scene "the most brutal act of violence performed by the poem's central figure, Achilles," See also Friedrich (above, p. 11, note 2) 100-2; W. Marg, "Kampf und Tod in der *Ilias*," *Die Antike* 18 (1942) 175-6.

[2] For some interesting speculation about the formula ἀργέτα δημόν and its relation to the theme of sacrifice of the twelve Trojan youths see Nagler (above, p. 6, note 1) p. 297, note 50.

τὸν μὲν ἄρ᾽ ἐγχέλυές τε καὶ ἰχθύες ἀμφεπένοντο,
δημὸν ἐρεπτόμενοι ἐπινεφρίδιον κείροντες.

These lines take us deeper into violence than the death of Lycaon just before. This mutilation is no longer given as a threat in a speech: it is now a matter of factual reality. The feeders here are not merely fish, as in the Lycaon passage, but eels as well. They do not only "lick the blood from the wound" (21.123), but "bite" (ἐρεπτόμενοι) and "tear" (κείροντες) the fat over the kidneys (204). The grim anatomical detail of δημὸν . . . ἐπινεφρίδιον (only here in Homer) replaces the formulaic "shining fat." The two participles, ἐρεπτόμενοι and κείροντες, reinforce one another. The absence of a connective and the skillful word order of 204 (noun—participle—adjective—participle) emphasize the energy of the eager scavengers.

The whole of the battle in the river constitutes, in fact, a massive enlargement of the mutilation theme. The bodies of Lycaon and Asteropaeus devoured by fish and eels are but specific instances of the fate which befalls all those nameless Trojans whose bodies choke the Scamander's "lovely streams" (cf. 21.218, 238). When the Scamander charges that Achilles "is doing evil to excess" (περὶ δ᾽ αἴσυλα ῥέζεις 21.214), we may assume that he means not merely the killing of the men, but the outrage to their bodies as well. The formula αἴσυλα ῥέζειν is used of especially violent acts which flout accepted limits and norms. In 5.403 it describes Heracles' shooting of the gods, and in the *Odyssey* it occurs in the indignant speeches of Mentor and Athena accusing the suitors of unrighteous behavior (*Od.* 2.232= 5.10). In *Iliad* 20.202 and 433 the word αἴσυλα is combined with κερτομίας in the battle speeches of Aeneas and Hector.

The battle in the river brings the corpse theme to a new pitch of horror in two ways. First, not just dogs and vultures devour the corpses, as is so often threatened in the *Iliad,* but eels and fish, and the mutilation is actually a fact, not just a remote threat. Second, the outrage of corpses reaches a scale hitherto unprecedented in the poem. It involves not just an isolated warrior or two, but numbers vast enough to impede the river's flow.

Another detail of this theme in the book is indicative of the scale and intensity to which the corpse theme is expanded. Early in the book Achilles in pursuit of the Trojans is compared to a dolphin "eating up" (κατεσθίει) whatever smaller fishes he can catch (21.22-4):

ὡς δ' ὑπὸ δελφῖνος μεγακήτεος ἰχθύες ἄλλοι
φεύγοντες πιμπλᾶσι μυχοὺς λιμένος εὐόρμου,
δειδιότες· μάλα γάρ τε κατεσθίει ὅν κε λάβῃσιν.

This simile forms part of the progression to greater violence. First fleeing men are *compared* to fish being devoured (21.22-4). Then Achilles threatens a human corpse (Lycaon) with being devoured by fish (21.122-4). Finally, the threat is actually fulfilled when Asteropaeus suffers this fate (21.203-4). There is a further link between these three passages: a brief description of the commingling of blood and water precedes each one: cf. 21.21, 119, and (implicitly) 202.

This enormous overreaching of Achilles' violence has nearly fatal results for the hero himself. For the only time in the poem Achilles is afraid (21.248) and flees. The Scamander's intervention at this point gives another turn to the corpse theme. Not only is the river threatening vengeance for being clogged by the corpses of Achilles' victims; it also attempts to bury Achilles in its mud and thus deprive him of proper burial (21.318-23). It would thus direct against Achilles himself the outraging of the corpse which he has inflicted on the Trojans. The gods discomfit the river and save Achilles, but this check on Achilles' savagery from a divine source will play an important role later in the poem.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CLIMAX: BOOK 22

Book 22, one of the great climactic books of the *Iliad*, is also a climactic point for the theme of the maltreated corpse. As elsewhere, the theme commences in a low key. Priam, after his entreaty from the wall, wishes that dogs and vultures may eat Achilles (22.42, τάχα κέν ἑ κύνες καὶ γῦπες ἔδοιεν). The formulaic line recalls Hector's fatal boast over Patroclus (σὲ δέ τ' ἐνθάδε γῦπες ἔδονται, 16.836). Now, however, it is Patroclus' slayer who is himself close to the same fate.

Priam expands the range of this theme with a vivid prophecy of what awaits him at Troy's fall. His own dogs, reared at his own table, will tear at his flesh and lap up his blood (22.66-71). The language is once more unusually vivid (cf. πρώτῃσι θύρῃσιν, 66; ἐμὸν αἷμα πιόντες ἀλύσσοντες περὶ θυμῷ, 70). In this passage the horror and brutality of war, as embodied in the mutilation theme, extend a step further to reach the helpless, the aged, the defenceless victims. Priam's contrast between young and old (22.71-6) reinforces this point.

The threatened mutilation of Priam by his own dogs in his own house (cf. 22.69) also illustrates one of the broader implications of the corpse theme: that is, the destruction of civilized values, of civilization itself, by the savagery which war and its passions release. Troy in the *Iliad* embodies the stability and refinement of civilized life, with its settled families, palaces, temples, treasures, weaving, "long-robed" women. The closer we come to its fall, the closer we move to a vision of that total savagery of which man may be capable, the obliteration of those civilized sanctions which include respect for the bodies of the dead.

When Priam fails to move Hector, Hecuba takes up the lament 22.86-9):

> εἴ περ γάρ σε κατακτάνῃ, οὔ σ' ἔτ' ἔγωγε
> κλαύσομαι ἐν λεχέεσσι, φίλον θάλος, ὃν τέκον αὐτή,
> οὐδ' ἄλοχος πολύδωρος· ἄνευθε δέ σε μέγα νῶϊν
> 'Αργείων παρὰ νηυσὶ κύνες ταχέες κατέδονται.

In the previous book Achilles had told Lycaon that his mother will not lament over him "on the bier": οὐδέ σε μήτηρ / ἐνθεμένη λεχέεσσι γοήσεται, (21.123-4). Now we actually hear the cry of a bereaved mother, the archetypal *mater dolorosa,* in the first person (κλαύσομαι), crying out that she will not bewail her son "on the bier" (22.86-7). The scene takes us a degree closer to the reality of the agony inflicted on the victims. The movement is analogous to the progression from the threat over Lycaon to its actual fulfilment in Asteropaeus (above, Chapter IV): a remote indirect possibility suddenly becomes concrete and dramatic.

With his sensitivity to the essence of basic human relationships, to the most fundamental ἦθος of his situations, Homer has Hecuba add new and telling details. She stresses the fact that Hector's body will lie "very far apart from us by the Argive ships" (22.88-9). This "very far apart from us" is characteristic of Homer's simplicity and directness in moments of the most intense emotion. Yet the word order in this simple expression (ἄνευθε δέ σε μέγα νῶϊν) and the addition of the adverb μέγα (an unusual use of the word to qualify another adverb) [1] add intensity to her perception of her removal from her son's body. The lines also reiterate the contrast between inner and outer realms, the safety of Troy and the deadly exposure of the battlefield, which was important in Priam's speech (22.38-9, 47, 50) and will become even more important in the Andromache scene later.[2]

The actual meeting between Hector and Achilles constitutes one of the strongest contrasts in the poem between civilized values and the savagery contained in the corpse theme. In 254-5 Hector appeals to the sanctions of oaths, the gods, agreements (ἁρμονίαι, a word which occurs only here in the *Iliad*).[3] He uses words which stress the processes of civilized and rational behavior. His verb ἀεικιῶ in 256 however, recalls the full violence of the corpse theme—violence initiated by Hector, who is now trying, unsuccessfully, to check its course.

Achilles naturally rejects such "agreements" (συνημοσύναι, 261,

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[1] See J. Van Leeuwen, ed., *Homeri Carmina, Ilias* (Leiden 1903) *ad loc.*

[2] Hecuba's reference to Andromache as ἄλοχος πολύδωρος not only anticipates her appearance later in the book, but also recalls her meeting with Hector in book 6, where the expression occurs for the first time (6.394).

[3] In the *Odyssey* (5.248 and 361) ἁρμονίαι describe the fastenings for Odysseus' raft. It doubtless preserves something of its concrete meaning here in Hector's speech.

also unique in the *Iliad*).[1] The terms of his rejection make clear the larger issues at stake. "Just as there are no trustworthy oaths (ὅρκια πιστά)," he says, "between lions and men, and just as wolves and lambs have no spirit of like-mindedness toward one another, but always are evil-minded to each other through and through, so for you and me there is no possibility of friendship or of oaths between us . . ." (22.261-6).

Here too there is a progression from an earlier stage of the narrative. As Hector was deciding on whether to meet Achilles or flee, he mused on a peaceful way of reaching an understanding with him (and one also involving an oath, 22.119). He then rejects this possibility in a striking and beautiful passage, a unique vision of calm and peace in the midst of the carnage and horror of these books: "There is no way from an oak or a stone to converse with him (ὀαριζέμεναι) after the manner of a maid and a youth, a maid and a youth in converse with one another" (22.126-8). Hector, so much closer than Achilles to the vulnerable, precious creations of civilization,[2] lets his mind dwell on youths and maidens (note the repetition in 127-8) when he is about to face this lonely, implacable warrior who has just clogged Troy's "lovely streams" with corpses.[3] Only here and on Achilles' shield, both ominous contexts, does one glimpse the happiness or gaiety of young love, at least in the human world.[4] Elsewhere Homer depicts only the doomed meetings

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[1] Compare, however, the verb συνώμεθα in 13.381. Note too the combination συνθεσίαι τε καὶ ὅρκια in 2.339 and 5.319. On such forms see in general Per Krarup, "Verwendung von Abstracta in der direkten Rede bei Homer," *C & M* 10 (1949) 1-17.

[2] Note the grief and indignation with which Hector recalls the waste of Troy's substance in 18.288-92.

[3] See Owen (above, p. 13, note 1) 222: "In the wistful insistence with which he repeats παρθένος ἠΐθεός τε you can see him trying to protect himself from the precise memory and struggling to keep it generalized." See also Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 211 and Carlo Gallavotti in *La poesia epica e la sua formazione*, Accad. Naz. dei Lincei, Quad. 139 (Rome 1970) 86. This kind of lilting repetition is very rare in the *Iliad*. The other instances of it are revealing, for they also occur in emotional contexts: in 20.371-2 Hector muses on Achilles' strength and on his own determination to face him "even if he has hands like fire, has hands like fire." In 23.283-4 Achilles contemplates the horses lamenting on his dead friend: τὸν τώ γ' ἑσταότες πενθείετον, οὔδεϊ δέ σφι / χαῖται ἐρηρέδαται, τὼ δ' ἕστατον ἀχνυμένω κῆρ.

[4] See 18.567-72 and 593-606. The combination of "youths and maidens" occurs only in these three passages (18.567, 18.593, 22.127). Aphrodite and her *kestos* in the *Dios Apate* belong, of course, to the gods, whose frivolity here (see 14.214ff.) only enhances the contrast with the world of men.

over which the threats of war hang heavily or the matter-of-fact unions of a captive woman and her lord.

Hector's verb ὀαρίζειν has a special reference to his own tragedy. It not only contrasts his imminent doom with a happier past which he is vainly defending, but it also recalls his own ill-fated bonds of love and marriage. The verb occurs in only one other place in Homer, namely at Hector's return to the battlefield after he "conversed with his wife" (ὀάριζε γυναικί, 6.516), there, as here, by the Scaean Gate.[1] Andromache's forebodings in that scene are realized in this very episode: "Your own zeal (*menos*) will destroy you," were her first words to Hector on the wall (6.407). And in this connection we may note the echo of that scene in Hecuba's ἄλοχος πολύδωρος (22.88 and 6.394).[2]

Hector's lines on the trysts of youths and maidens (22.126-8) complement his later appeal to "oaths" and "agreements" in 254-5. There he looks to the legal and sacred covenants between men, the formal, ratified bonds that check impulses toward just the kind of "outrage" (cf. ἀεικιῶ, 256) which he is trying to avert. Here in 126-8 he calls to mind the private, informal embellishments of civilization, the warmth and tenderness with which human beings can treat one another. Neither aspect of man's civility is to prove an effective bulwark against the unchanging instinctive enmities of wild beasts (261-6) or the indifference and inflexibility of dumb nature (the rocks and oaks of 126) which are associated with Achilles' wrath. What is left on this bleak plain outside the gates of the doomed city is the relentless law of the wild: beast against man (262) and beast against beast (263).

The contrast between civilization and savagery dominates this book. The first half of 22 contains several prominent animal similes in close conjunction: the cold, mute anger of the waiting, venomous snake to which Hector is likened (22.93-5) and the comparison of his flight to deer and dogs (22.1, 189-92)[3] and hawks and doves

[1] See Owen (above, p. 13, note 1) 221. The word ὀαριστύς occurs with an erotic sense in 14.216, and elsewhere it is used ironically of the encounters of warriors (e.g. 5.486, 9.327, 13,291, 17.228).

[2] Note also the echo of 6.407 in Andromache's speech at the end of the book (22.459). There are a number of significant echoes of book 6 in this passage (e.g. 6.389 and 22.460), and for these see my essay in *HSCP* 75 (above, p. 1, note 2) 39-40, 41, 48, 51, 53.

[3] There is perhaps another significant echo of the Patrocleia here: cf. the simile of vultures in 16.428-30. The passage just after this vulture simile (16.433ff.) is clearly echoed in 22.168. Cf. also my remarks on 22.361ff. below.

(22.139-42). The lion and wolf similes of Achilles in 262-3, therefore, are only the last stage in a gradual progression.[1]

Over against the destructive implications of these animal similes stand the twin springs of Troy, the embodiment of the joy and fruitfulness of civilization, the peace and stability of life "before the sons of the Achaeans came" (22.156). Here too there is an interesting connection with the theme of the corpse. Immediately after the description of the two springs the pursuit of Hector is compared to a horse race at funerary games (22.162-4). The passage anticipates the elaborate rituals for Patroclus in the next book. This context, however, places the due funerary rites in a precarious position (cf. 42, 66ff., 86ff.). It juxtaposes them with those other, equally threatened values of civilization implied in Hector's "youth and maid," in the springs, and later in the oaths and treaties. The existence of all these expressions of a civilized spirit hangs by a thread.

That thread is severed in the scene of Hector's death. Achilles' speech of exultation begins by recalling Hector's killing of Patroclus (22.331) and ends with an echo of Hector's own boast over the fallen Patroclus (22.335-6):

σὲ μὲν κύνες ἠδ' οἰωνοὶ
ἑλκήσουσ' ἀϊκῶς, τὸν δὲ κτεριοῦσιν 'Αχαιοί.

Hector had said to Patroclus (16.836), σὲ δέ τ' ἐνθάδε γῦπες ἔδονται. Not only does Achilles here echo this cardinal scene, but his last line restates, now under the cruelest conditions, that contrast between the outrage of Hector and the due funeral rites of Patroclus which Achilles had promised over his friend's body (18.334-5). The phrase ἑλκήσουσ' ἀϊκῶς, however, combines the Hector—Patroclus contrast with the "outrage" theme (ἀεικίζειν) developed since book 16. The adverb ἀϊκῶς occurs only here, and it is to be recalled in the solemn conclusion to the episode (22.403-4), τότε δὲ Ζεὺς δυσμενέεσσι/δῶκεν ἀεικίσσασθαι ἑῇ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ.

The combination κύνες ἠδ' οἰωνοί (22.335) is of surprisingly infrequent occurrence in the corpse theme. Achilles uses the phrase a few lines later (354). But its most famous occurrence is in the opening lines of the poem (1.4-5), ἑλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν/οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι. Hector's death is the most tragic of those rendings by dogs and birds foretold in the proem.

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[1] Note also the destructive simile of the blazing star at 22.26ff.

Echoing Hecuba's words of 22.89, Hector begs Achilles not to "let the dogs of the Achaeans devour him by the ships" (339), but rather to restore the body to the Trojans for the proper cremation (342-3). The verb for the dogs' "devouring" the corpse in 339 is καταδάψαι, a compound which occurs only here in the *Iliad.* Achilles gives an ironic twist to this entreaty in the next book when he asserts that he will not give Hector "to the fire to devour, but to the dogs" (Ἕκτορα δ' οὔ τι / δώσω Πριαμίδην πυρὶ δαπτέμεν, ἀλλὰ κύνεσσιν, 23.182-3).

Achilles' reply to Hector's plea goes a stage beyond the violence of 335-6. It carries the fairly familiar (if strongly stated) formulation of the mutilation theme in that passage to its furthest point in the poem.

First, Achilles rejects the entreaty of supplication, the embracing of knees or appeal to parents (μή με, κύον, γούνων γουνάζεο μηδὲ τοκήων, 22.345). His gesture continues that total rejection of civilized communication and civilized sanctions which he expressed in 22.261-7. His next statement is as follows (22.346-8):

αἲ γάρ πως αὐτόν με μένος καὶ θυμὸς ἀνείη
ὤμ' ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα ἔδμεναι, οἷα ἔοργας,
ὡς οὐκ ἔσθ' ὃς σῆς γε κύνας κεφαλῆς ἀπαλάλκοι.

Would that the violent anger of my heart would let me cut up your flesh and eat it raw—such things you have done—since there is no one who would ward off the dogs from your head.

This is one of the most savage utterances in the poem. Whatever restraint there was in Achilles' earlier refusals of entreaties is here swept completely away.[1]

It is true that Achilles has refused ransom before, notably to Lycaon (21.94ff.). But that scene, for all the terror of Achilles' "icy serenity," [2] contained some appreciation of the universality of death and of the ultimate kinship of victim and slayer therein (see 21.106-13) which is absent here. There is another major difference between the two scenes. In the Lycaon episode, as elsewhere in the *Iliad* too, the suppliant is begging for his life [3]. But

[1] On the extraordinary violence here see Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 323-4; Murray (above, p. 12, note 2) 142; Owen (above, p. 13, note 1) 229-31.

[2] McFarland (above, p. 11, note 1) 191.

[3] *Il.* 6.45-65, 10.378ff., 10.454-7, 11.129-47.

Hector's life is already lost. He is imploring only the decent treatment of his corpse, a situation which has no precise parallel elsewhere in the poem.[1] Even so, the refusal of the suppliant in the passages cited above is a mark of a special cruelty; and, as noted earlier, in the last two of the three instances cited the victim is also beheaded.

Achilles' violence in 22.346-8 has another side. It is the climax of one of the main elements of the story, the hero's grief at the loss of his companion, a theme which extends as far back into the Mediterranean epic tradition as the *Gilgamesh Epic*. Hence his language throughout this speech must be appropriate to the immensity of passion and to the status of the greatest of the heroes. His violence and hatred should be commensurate with his *arete*. On the other hand Homer presents Achilles' violence in a narrative structure which is calculated to win a maximum of sympathy for Hector rather than for his vanquisher. We have heard the appeals of Priam and Hecuba, with their moving variations on the corpse theme. We have seen the deliberations and the inner movements within Hector's soul in 99-130 and the background of Troy's peaceful life in the springs of 145-56. And we have heard Achilles savagely reject the established sanctions of oaths and agreements in the scene of 250-72.

The eating of raw flesh and the image of the dogs worrying the head of the corpse (22.348) surpass anything else in the *Iliad* in the outrage of a fallen enemy. Lines 346-54 form an unusually long and complex sentence with a rising rhythm, beginning and ending with the threat of dogs (348, 354).[2] Achilles' last line, despite its formulaic "dogs and birds," (ἀλλὰ κύνες τε καὶ οἰωνοὶ κατὰ πάντα δάσονται, 22.354), also gives an emphatic distinctiveness to the hero's violence. The expression κατὰ πάντα δάσονται is a variant of the formula ἄνδιχα πάντα δάσασθαι which was used by Hector of a

[1] The closest analogy is perhaps Sarpedon's plea to Hector, 5.684ff. But Sarpedon's last words, are, appropriately, not supplication, but a manly request for aid on the basis of services rendered and a realistic acceptance of his loss. Cf. also his last speech to Glaucus, 16.492ff., which is as much a rallying cry as a plea for aid.

[2] See Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 324, with note 1 on p. 470: "Die Übersetzung konnte es nicht ganz herausbringen, wie dieser Satz, der in Vers 348 schon einmal sein Ziel erreicht hat: 'so wahr lebt keiner, der dir die Hunde vom Haupte scheuchte,' sich dann in Stufen ('und auch nicht wenn . . . , und auch nicht . . . , auch so nicht . . .') noch einmal erhebt zu dem ehernen: 'sondern Hunde und Vögel werden dich ganz zerreissen!"

division of Troy's wealth earlier in the book (22.120; cf. 18.511).[1] Its recurrence here, when Achilles has rejected all such accords, may be an ironic reflection on Hector's false hopes. The verb δατέεσθαι can be used of the peaceful and orderly division of booty, property, spheres of power.[2] In a few instances it describes especially violent tearing or rending. In 20.394 it is used of a warrior torn apart by the wheels of a chariot passing over him. In 23.121 it is used of the splitting of wood. The *Odyssey* provides the closest analogies to our passage. In the two relevant cases the verb describes an emphatically cruel, fearful punishment, throwing a man's genitals raw to the dogs, first in a threat by Antinous and then in Odysseus' punishment of Melanthius (*Od.* 18.87 = 22.476). The progression from Hector's deluded hopes of a peaceful settlement by a "division" of property (ἄνδιχα πάντα δάσασθαι 22.120) to Achilles' threat to let dogs and birds make a "division" of his flesh (κατὰ πάντα δάσονται 22.354) is in itself a measure of the depth of brutality into which the action has moved and a measure of the difference between the defensive and the offensive heroes.

In 352-3 Achilles threatens that Hector's "lady mother will not put him on the bier and lament over him." This statement not only negates the appeal to the sanctity of parents which runs throughout the scene (338, 341, 345); it also confirms Hecuba's near-hysterical forebodings (22.86-7). The point is underscored by the repetition of ὃν τέκον (τέκεν) αὐτή in both 87 and 353. The lines also echo Achilles' cruel treatment of Lycaon's corpse in book 21 (21.124a = 22.353a). Achilles' speech is thus the climax of both the mutilation theme as a whole and the sub-theme of the despairing mother's losing her lamentation over the corpse of her son.

The phrase ὤμ' ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα ἔδμεναι (347) requires special comment. The placing of the long participle between adjective and noun, both short words, gives a striking effect. Eating raw flesh is always a sign of special violence in the *Iliad*. The adjective ὠμοφάγος is reserved for jackals (11.479), wolves (16.157), and lions (5.782, 7.256, 15.592). The only references to eating human flesh in the poem occur where there is a special point made of savagery and cruelty. Zeus accuses Hera of such a desire toward the Trojans

[1] Cf. also Hector's promise of 17.229-32 and Achilles' promise to Patroclus' shade in 24.595.

[2] See, e.g., *Il.* 1.125 and 368, 5.158, 9.138 and 280, 15.189, etc. In 18.264, however, the verb is used metaphorically of a duel, "dividing the forces of Ares."

(4.30-36); and Hecuba, in her unrestrained grief, utters a similar wish in book 24 (24.212-13; see below, Chapter VII). The *Odyssey* too portrays the anthropophagous habits of the Cyclops and the Laestrygonians with special horror (e.g. *Od.* 9.287-98, 371-4; 10.112-24). In the *Work and Days* the abstention from cannibalism is the distinguishing feature separating men, who have *dike*, from "fish and beasts and winged birds" who "eat one another" (276-80). Earlier in book 22 Achilles had rejected the civilized practices of "oaths," "agreements," and "treaties." Now he rejects an even more fundamental law of Greek civilization and, if only as a threat, calls up the primitive taboos against cannibalism.[1]

The actual mutilation of Hector soon follows. The theme of τὸν νεκρὸν ἀεικίζειν which began with Sarpedon in book 16 (16.545) now reaches its climax. The Greeks stab the corpse (22.375) and afterward Achilles "devised his deeds of outrage" (ἀεικέα μήδετο ἔργα, 22.395), piercing the ankles to tie the body behind his chariot.

We have already noted the significant parallel between Sarpedon and Hector's death in 22.361-3. There is another parallel here in this defilement of Hector's body. Hector's head is befouled in the dust (22.401-4):

> τοῦ δ' ἦν ἑλκομένοιο κονίσαλος, ἀμφὶ δὲ χαῖται
> κυάνεαι πίτναντο, κάρη δ' ἅπαν ἐν κονίῃσι
> κεῖτο πάρος χαρίεν· τότε δὲ Ζεὺς δυσμενέεσσι
> δῶκεν ἀεικίσσασθαι ἑῇ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ.

The passage recalls, of course, the befouling of Achilles' helmet at the death of Patroclus (16.793-9). Sarpedon's body too, though through different causes, had been similarly befouled (16.638-40):[2]

> οὐδ' ἂν ἔτι φράδμων περ ἀνὴρ Σαρπηδόνα δῖον
> ἔγνω, ἐπεὶ βελέεσσι καὶ αἵματι καὶ κονίῃσιν
> ἐκ κεφαλῆς εἴλυτο διαμπερὲς ἐς πόδας ἄκρους.

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[1] See, for example, Hdt. 3.38; Moschion frag. 6. 14ff. N², Petronius, *Satiricon* 141. See now S. L. Shein, "Odysseus and Polyphemus in the *Odyssey*," *GRBS* 11 (1970) 74-5, on the theme of eating raw flesh. Compare the cruel punishment of giving an enemy's "raw flesh" to the dogs in *Od.* 18.87 and 22.476, and see above, p. 14, note 2.

[2] Compare also 17.51-2, where the motif occurs with its full pathos, perhaps as an anticipation of Hector's later fate. See also 15.538 and 17.439 and in general Fenik (above, p. 20, note 1) 163.

Not only is the echo appropriate, but it also sets off the specialness of the mutilation motif in Hector's case. Homer has reserved the more moving and solemn effect for Hector. He has thinned out the details (omitting, for example, "missiles" and "blood"), used three parallel clauses with effective enjambements, and heightened this rhythmic movement by a strong alliteration of *k* and *p* sounds.

The language describing the mutilation here is distinctive and nontraditional. It culminates in the summarizing statement, τότε δὲ Ζεὺς δυσμενέεσσι / δῶκεν ἀεικίσσασθαι ἑῇ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ (403-4). The solemn expression underlines the specialness of this the most crucial and suspensefully awaited "outrage" of a corpse in the poem. Yet the familiar formulaic cadence, ἑῇ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ, connects this unique and special instance of "outrage" with the fate of all those warriors who have fallen either "in" or "far from" their "dear native land."[1] The solemnity of this statement echoes another solemn moment in the poem, and one already echoed in these lines, namely the point in the Patrocleia when Hector snatched up Achilles' helmet from the dust (16.799-800):

> τότε δὲ Ζεὺς Ἕκτορι δῶκεν
> ᾗ κεφαλῇ φορέειν, σχεδόθεν δέ οἱ ἦεν ὄλεθρος.

Zeus' "gift" (22.403-4) is different now as the ὄλεθρος is complete.

Hector's dark hair, falling in the dust, is a special and vivid detail (401-3). κυάνεαι as an attribute of hair is unique in the *Iliad*, except in the compound adjective κυανοχαίτης, an attribute generally reserved for Poseidon.[2] The defilement of this lovely hair and head, "beautiful before" (πάρος χαρίεν, 403) is parallel with the destruction of the civilized grace of Troy, as it was "before" (22.156). Hector's death signals the fall of Troy, and in fact the lamentation of the people on the wall is compared to the situation of all Troy "smouldering with the fires of its ruin" (22.410-11):

> τῷ δὲ μάλιστ' ἄρ' ἔην ἐναλίγκιον, ὡς εἰ ἅπασα
> Ἴλιος ὀφρυόεσσα πυρὶ σμύχοιτο κατ' ἄκρης.

Here again the outraging of the corpse reflects a large-scale submergence of the precious and beautiful goods of civilization.

The light blazing from the enraged Achilles' head heralding his

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[1] On the formulaic repetition and its significance see Bowra, "Style" (above, p. 3 note, 1) 33; Wade-Gery (above, p. 3, note 2) 41.

[2] *Kuaneos* is also used of the brows of Zeus, 1.528 = 17.209.

return to the war had been compared to the flaming towers of a fallen city (18.207-14). Achilles' savage pursuit of the Trojans in the river was also compared to smoke arising from a burning city when "the wrath of the gods sends it forth" (21.522-5). Hector's death now focuses that general image specifically on Troy itself, Ἴλιος ὀφρυόεσσα (22.411). This progression of similes gives an ominous significance to the description of the springs outside the wall, for the warm spring sends up smoke "as if a fire were burning" (ὡς εἰ πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο 22.149-50). And Priam's terrible vision earlier in book 22 of his sons killed, his daughters dragged away, his chambers plundered, and himself torn by dogs (60ff.) has prepared us further to see in Hector's death a catastrophe encompassing all Troy (ἅπασα / Ἴλιος, 22.410-11), and in a sense all of civilization.[1]

In another way too the defilement of Hector's head in the dust reveals the poem's inclusiveness of vision and its concern with a moral structure behind human events. The detail of Hector's hair vividly recalls the defilement of Achilles' helmet as Hector struck down Patroclus.[2] Thus it suggests the price paid by Hector for his earlier success. The echo of Patroclus' death in the distinctive lines which describe Hector's *psyche* departing for the lower world (22.361-4 = 16.855-8) forms one of the most clearly significant repetitions in the poem. The lines occur nowhere else in the *Iliad*.[3]

The theme of the maltreatment of the corpse reaches its second climax in the reaction of Andromache at the end of book 22. Here, as in the scenes with Priam and Hecuba at the beginning of the book, Homer depicts the outrage of the corpse from the point of view of the bereaved who remain within the city. When Andromache sees Hector's body "being dragged before the city" (ἑλκόμενον πρόσθεν πόλιος, 22.464) she faints dead away (22.466-7). Though Andromache has not witnessed Hector's death agonies on the plain,

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[1] For the destruction of Troy see also 20.315-17, 21.373-6, 24.244-6, 383-5, 728ff., and note also the simile of the bright star in 22.26ff. On the imagery in general see Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 137ff. and D. M. Knight, "Dramatic and Descriptive Order in the *Iliad*," *YCS* 14 (1955) 115-17.

[2] Compare also the line of Hector's realization, 22.297, ὢ πόποι, ἦ μάλα δή με θεοὶ θάνατόνδε κάλεσσαν, and the announcement of Patroclus' doom, 16.693: Πατρόκλεις, ὅτε δή σε θεοὶ θάνατόνδε κάλεσσαν. In Hector's case the words have a heightened pathos, being set in the first person.

[3] For the parallels see Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 323, with note 1 on p. 470; Valgiglio, 39; also my essay in *HSCP* 75 (above, p. 1, note 2) 51-2.

her phrase, ἕλκον ἀκηδέστως recalls Achilles' ἑλκήσουσ' ἀϊκῶς (336) and thus brings the horror and savagery of that scene before us again, but now through her eyes. The repetition ἑλκόμενον . . .ἕλκον in 464-5 stresses what is especially relevant in the scene for her. Not only is the body being "dragged," but it is dragged ἀκηδέστως. The adverb does not merely mean "cruelly," but suggests the negations of the proper κήδεα, the rites of mourning, which the grieving relations (κηδεμόνες) would perform. That view from the wall is the most painful possible violation of the love and respect with which a wife would treat her husband's remains. Andromache experiences not just the death of Hector, but the death joined simultaneously with the mutilation of his corpse. By telescoping these two hammerblows of grief into one, Homer makes Andromache at this point the bearer of the uttermost cruelty of war.[1]

Andromache sees the corpse being dragged "to the hollow ships of the Achaeans" (22.465). This objective, formulaically rendered detail becomes part of Andromache's intense subjectivity at the end of her long lamentation. There, as she turns back from Astyanax to Hector, she imagines the corpse "naked" (510), rotting "by the curved ships" (παρὰ νηυσὶ κορωνίσι, 508). The ship motif has been a minor part of the overall theme of the mutilated corpse. Throughout book 22 it gains an increasing power as it reverberates from Hecuba (22.89) to Hector (22.339) to Andromache (22.508). With his characteristic power of ἦθος, however, Homer has Andromache add another detail to the ship theme. Hector lies not only "by the curved ships," but also "far from his parents" (παρὰ νηυσὶ κορωνίσι νόσφι τοκήων, 22.508). We may recall Hecuba's cry that the dogs will eat Hector "very far away from us by the ships of the Argives" (22.88-9). Andromache's words in 508 play upon the theme of bereft parents important elsewhere in the book (see 22.38ff., 82ff., 345); but it is also appropriate that she, with her special sense of domestic relationships, should add this detail.

Here too language reinforces the use of parallel and contrast inherent in Homer's method of composition. Andromache's phrase, νόσφι τοκήων recalls Achilles' statement of his own fate when he answered Xanthus' prophecy of his death at Troy: "I myself

[1] The same point holds, of course, for Priam and Hecuba, but it is Andromache's and not their reaction which Homer dramatizes most strongly. See also Bassett (above, p. 1, note 2) 36; *HSCP* 75 (above, p. 1, note 2) 55-7.

know well that it is my portion to perish here, far from my dear father and mother . . ." (νόσφι φίλου πατρὸς καὶ μητέρος, 19.421-2).[1] Achilles will be, ultimately, even more alone than Hector. The parallel between the two situations embraces the suffering of both men in an overarching comprehension of the totality of human suffering, a universal sympathy for the omnipresence of loss, separation, the grief of distant parents. A passage in book 23 makes even more explicit this connection between Achilles' suffering and the grief of Hector's survivors. Achilles lamenting Patroclus is compared to a father mourning a son "who dying brings grief to his wretched parents" (ὅς τε θανὼν δειλοὺς ἀκάχησε τοκῆας, 23.223). And in book 24 Achilles' thoughts link his own father and Patroclus together when he looks on the prostrate old Priam (24.509-12).

Hecuba in 22.88-9 spoke of "swift dogs" eating Hector by the ships, Andromache elaborates on this image with a vision of "wriggling worms" devouring the corpse "when the dogs are sated" (αἰόλαι εὐλαὶ ἔδονται, ἐπεί κε κύνες κορέσωνται, 22.509). This is but the second place that the *Iliad* mentions worms. In book 19 (25-7) Achilles had feared worms and maggots in Patroclus' body, but his goddess mother offered protection. Andromache can hope for no such divine assistance. The addition of the vivid adjective αἰόλαι,[2] with the open vowels and repeated *l* sounds of αἰόλαι εὐλαί, as well as the *k* alliteration in the second half of 22.509, indicates how graphically and courageously she pictures to herself the horror to which her husband's corpse is exposed.

Finally, Andromache adds another new detail, unique to her situation and characteristic of her special relation to Hector. She will burn the garments "light and graceful" which lie in the halls,

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[1] The objection of F. M. Combellack, "Some Formulary Illogicalities in Homer," *TAPA* 96 (1965) 51 is thus beside the point: "This looks like a fine formulary way of dealing with a formulary situation: the young man doomed to die far away from home and parents. The passage is not very well suited, however, to the abnormal situation of Achilles. His mother is not at home, like an ordinary human mother." Combellack has to weaken his own argument when he says a few lines later, "But, although the phraseology is *in a way* inappropriate, we cannot be sure that it is the result of a misuse of a formula or idea *since the appropriate use happens not to occur in the poems*" (my italics).

[2] The phrase αἰόλαι εὐλαί is unique in Homer. The primary significance of *aiolos* is "quick-moving," "shifting in movement," and therefore "bright" or "shiny." In the *Iliad* it is applied to snakes, bees, horses, armor, and shields. In the *Odyssey* it occurs only once, of a gadfly (22.300).

for Hector will not lie in them. This personal and intimate detail reflects the totality of that separation between inner and outer worlds, city and battlefield, woman and hero, which has already been important in the presentation of Hector's fate. At the beginning of this scene Andromache had been weaving "in the recess of her lofty house" (μυχῷ δόμου ὑψηλοῖο, 22.440) while her husband "remained outside the gates" (22.439).[1] That division between inner and outer now becomes absolute and irreparable as Hector lies by the ships, "far from his parents."

Andromache's burning of the clothes is a fine illustration of Homer's feeling for significant detail and of his ability to extract the fullest weight of meaning from the small, regular actions of an individual life. The smallness, almost triviality of the detail, juxtaposed as it is with the public magnitude of Hector's death (cf. 410-11 and 507), brings a heightened sense of the loss to Andromache's private life. Her loss reflects, once more, the larger collapse of a stable, civilized world. As the mistress of Hector's household, Andromache has charge of the garments which Hector wears, which he would wear at that funeral of which Andromache now despairs. The clothing, like the bath of 22.442-6, reflects the special intimacy of the bond between husband and wife, the shared domestic economy wherein the warrior-husband enters into the woman's world.[2] The disintegration of this sheltered woman's world and of her woman's responsibilities as Hector's wife is the next step after Andromache casts away her κρήδεμνον shortly before (22.468ff.) That gesture, with its crowd of happy memories behind it, cancels the lighter, more youthful aspect of her marriage, those joys over which "golden Aphrodite" (22.470) presided at her wedding day;[3] the gesture of burning the garments in 510ff. cancels those duties of marriage which come in maturer life and old age.

[1] Note the earlier preparation for this inner-outer conflict in the exchange between Polydamas and Hector, 18.256 and 274-6. See also *HSCP* 75 (above, p. 1, note 2) 38-9 and note 45, pp. 56-7.

[2] See Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 331-2: "Das Kleid ist der persönlichste Besitz des Menschen, der auch im abgelegten Kleid mit seiner Person noch irgendwie zugegen ist, ein Stück von ihm selbst nicht weniger als in der kriegerischen Hinsicht seine Waffe . . . Da ist etwas von ihm, womit er völlig ihrer Welt gehörte—es soll ins Feuer . . ."

[3] On the significance of the κρήδεμνον see Nagler (above, p. 6, note 1) 300ff. Homer has introduced this detail solely for dramatic effect, since as Bassett points out (above, p. 1, note 2) 129-30, Andromache is not likely to be wearing a veil and headdress under these circumstances. See also *HSCP* 75 (above, p. 1, note 2) 49-50.

Calmer than Hecuba, Andromache does not complain that she will not lament over her husband's bier (22.86-7).[1] Instead she exhibits that realism and courage which she evinced in the scene on the wall (cf. 6.407ff.): she sees clearly the grim image of worms and dogs around the naked corpse. The emphatically enjambed (if formulaic) γυμνόν in 510 makes a powerful contrast between the reality of the corpse and the distant hopes contained in the elaborate but now useless garments to which the whole of the next line (511) is devoted.

The destruction by fire of these "light and graceful garments" repeats the violation of the beauty of civilized life by the barbarity of war. We recall the pursuit by the springs where, in times before, the women of Troy washed their "shining garments" (22.154). We recall too the defilement of Hector's κάρη . . . πάρος χαρίεν in the dust (22.402-3) and the repeated similes of fire destroying a city. The burning of the garments, like lines 402-3, makes a strong connection between the violation of the vulnerable beauty of civilization and the desecration of the corpse. This act concentrates the destruction of civilization concretely in the death and mutilation of a single character.[2] As Andromache herself implies in the line just before she speaks of the outraged corpse, Hector's death removes the last effective barrier to the destruction of the city (οἶος γάρ σφιν ἔρυσο πύλας καὶ τείχεα μακρά, 22.507).

Through details such as those described above, Homer uses the outrage of Hector's corpse to explore the widening circles of the savagery released by the war. Ultimately the outrage of the corpse comes to forebode the outrage of Troy itself and of the civilization guarded behind Troy's gates. At the same time Homer lets each character's response to the outrage reveal his or her special relation to Hector. Changes and elaboration within recurrent formulas provide small, but effective indications of parallelism or contrast through which can be read the progression into greater and greater violence.

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[1] On Andromache's calm see Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 329.
[2] Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 326 calls the befouling of Hector's hair "Symbol seines verwirklichten Untergangs."

CHAPTER SIX

PERSPECTIVE AND TRANSITION: BOOK 23

Book 23 develops the contrast between Hector and Patroclus which we have already noted as a subsidiary part of the corpse theme.[1] Achilles, returning from the field with Hector's body behind his chariot, again laments over Patroclus (23.6-11) and repeats the kernel of his promise to sacrifice twelve Trojan youths (23.22-3 = 18.336-7). Those promises are now a vivid reality. The grim detail about devouring Hector's raw flesh is in the background of Achilles' promise to "give Hector's raw flesh to the dogs to divide up" (δώσειν κυσὶν ὠμὰ δάσασθαι, 23.21; cf. ὤμ' ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα ἔδμεναι, 22.347). The line which follows his speech, ἦ ῥα, καὶ Ἕκτορα δῖον ἀεικέα μήδετο ἔργα (23.24), also echoes the actual mutilation of Hector in the previous book (cf. 22.395) and thus continues the savagery of the ἀεικίζειν motif here.

The contrast between burial for Patroclus and mutilation for Hector receives a dim glimmer of light, however, from Achilles' phrase in 23.9, "Let us lament Patroclus, for that is the honor of the dead" (ὃ γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ θανόντων). These words echo the reassuring pronouncement of Zeus over Sarpedon in book 16 (457 and 675). While reminding us of how far Hector now stands from receiving that γέρας θανόντων, the phrase also suggests a possible balancing of the completed funeral on the Greek side with the promise of a completed funeral for a Trojan champion (cf. 16. 674-5). Thus it helps prepare for that gentler treatment of Hector's corpse which will come about, as did the funeral of Sarpedon, through the mercy of the gods.[2]

Achilles' very next lines, "But when we have taken our joy of destructive lamentation, let us all loose our horses and take food here" (23.10-11), point toward another change of tone. In book 19 Achilles could think of nothing but killing. Hot for the blood of his enemies, he totally disregarded the army's need for food and

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[1] See especially 18.336-42 and 22.331-36, with the discussion of these passages above, p. 28-9, 37.

[2] See Owen (above, p. 13, note 1) 234: "When the funeral of Patroclus in Bk. XXIII repeats the closing cadence of the Sarpedon episode, it confirms the need and creates the assurance of Bk. XXIV."

urged a battle at once.[1] Here he himself urges the Myrmidons to eat. The refusal of food in book 19 reflected Achilles' total concentration on death and bloodshed. While Patroclus is unavenged, he will take neither food nor drink (19.209-10). Such things "are of no concern in my heart, but rather slaughter and blood and the painful groaning of men" (ἀλλὰ φόνος τε καὶ αἷμα καὶ ἀργαλέος στόνος ἀνδρῶν, 19.214). Hitherto, Achilles, having given up his own hold on life, could not respect life in another. His rejection of food is part of this surrender to the destructiveness of war and the destructiveness within his own soul. Hence Lycaon's appeal to having shared bread, "Demeter's grain," with him under his own roof (21.75-6) means nothing to him.[2] He rejects these small, but precious acts which hallow life, as he had rejected Hector's appeals to "oaths" and to the respect due a suppliant in book 22. Only when Achilles has laid to rest the body of his friend and relinquished the body of his enemy—relinquished, that is, something of the totality of his own surrender to death [3]—, will he again be able to respect a suppliant and share in those acts of renewal which affirm life's goodness and value: partaking of food with Priam, sleeping, lying beside Briseis (24.601ff., 676).

The gentler side of Achilles, almost forgotten amid the battle scenes of books 20-22, slowly begins to reemerge. But it does so in a way which remains faithful to the complexity of his character. That complexity is fully present in this passage. Just before his farewell speech to Patroclus in 23.19ff. Achilles "lays his man-slaughtering hands on the breast of his companion" (χεῖρας ἐπ' ἀνδροφόνους θέμενος στήθεσσιν ἑταίρου, 23.18). "Man-slaying hands" remind us of the hero's murderous violence even in the tenderness of his grief. The line takes us back to the beginning of Achilles'

[1] See 19.145-183, 199-214, 303-21. Also Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 178-9. Valgiglio (above, p. 10, note 2) 35-6 nicely points up the contrast between Achilles in book 9, "ormai tutto orientato verso le delizie della vita" and Achilles in 18, "forgiatore della propria sorte coll' uccisione di Ettore."

[2] See McFarland (above, p. 11, note 1) 204-5.

[3] See Weil (above, p. 11, note 1) 30-31: Quel écho peut trouver dans de tels coeurs la timide aspiration de la vie, quand le vaincu supplie qu'on lui permette de voir encore le jour? . . . Comment celui qui a détruit en lui-même la pensée que voir la lumière est doux la respecterait-il dans cette plainte humble et vaine? . . . Il faut, pour respecter la vie en autrui quand on a dû se mutiler soi-même de toute aspiration à vivre, un effort de générosité à briser le coeur."

grief in book 18 (23.17-18 = 18.316-17). "Manslaying hands" (in a different combination) occurs one other time in the *Iliad*, at the beginning of the great scene between Achilles and Priam: Priam kisses the hands of his son's killer, "terrible, manslaying" (δεινὰς ἀνδροφόνους 24.479).[1] In all three passages the adjective occurs in a context which reveals how sharply Achilles' intense soul swings between the outermost extremes of love and hate.

The passage in book 18 which is echoed here in 23.19ff. presented that complexity in a rich and subtle simile. Achilles lays his "man-slaying hands upon the breast of his companion" (18.317) and groans like a lion searching for cubs that a huntsman has taken away (18.318-22). The comparison to the lion suggests fierceness and violence (cf. 18.322, μάλα γὰρ δριμὺς χόλος αἱρεῖ). Yet there is also a note of tenderness in the parental concern of the animal for its helpless young, its grief (18.320), and its determined search for the hunter (18.321-2). We have heard this note in Achilles before, in the unusual simile with which he compares Patroclus' tears at the beginning of book 16 to a young girl running after her mother (16.7-11). In book 23 Achilles' grief will be compared to that of a father mourning over his son (23.222-5). The lion simile of book 18 is the most complex of these passages, however, for it condenses the combination of violence and tenderness into a single vivid image. As the intensity of Achilles' passions reaches its peak in books 21 and 22, this polarity of emotions stands out even more strikingly. For a while he is defenceless before the waves of uncontrollable emotion which sweep over him as he goes from one corpse to the other, venting love or hate upon each in turn.

As book 23 continues, however, the mood of the corpse theme undergoes an increasingly significant alteration. Hitherto it has been a vehicle of extreme emotional intensity, packed with an unrelieved grimness and horror. Now, as the *Iliad* draws to a close, both the emotionality and the grimness change.

In 23.59ff. Achilles lies groaning by the sea (23.59-61):

> Πηλεΐδης δ' ἐπὶ θινὶ πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης
> κεῖτο βαρὺ στενάχων, πολέσιν μετὰ Μυρμιδόνεσσιν,
> ἐν καθαρῷ, ὅθι κύματ' ἐπ' ἠϊόνος κλύζεσκον.

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[1] On the phrase see Gomme (above, p. 3, note 1) 13-14. Severyns (above, p. 10, note 1) 3.147, note 2, comments, "Ici le poète, comme si souvent, trahit son émotion."

The broad landscape, with its evocation of the independent world of nature (cf. 61, ὅθι κύματ' ἐπ' ἠϊόνος κλύζεσκον), opens a widened, potentially calmer perspective, beyond the self-enclosed grief of Achilles. The passage suggests an enlarged temporal as well as spatial perspective, for the scene recalls Achilles' first grief, when he sat alone by the sea in book 1 (1.327). Immediately sleep seizes Achilles, pouring sweetly around him and "loosing the cares of his heart" (λύων μελεδήματα θυμοῦ / νήδυμος ἀμφιχυθείς, 23.62-3).

In this relatively tranquil setting the shade of Patroclus appears and requests burial as quickly as possible (23.69-74). The request obviously has its practical side: his *psyche* cannot otherwise cross the river into Hades. But it also constitutes a reproach to the violence of Achilles' treatment of the corpse. It is the first major check on Achilles' behavior toward the dead. He has held on to the body in a desperately possessive attempt to prolong his remaining contact with his companion. When he reaches out in vain to embrace Patroclus' shade and dashes his hands together as the shade vanishes "like smoke" (23.100), he experiences fully the final vacuity of death. "There is in Hades a shade, an image, but there is no life at all in it," he cries (ἦ ῥά τίς ἐστι καὶ εἰν 'Αΐδαο δόμοισι/ ψυχὴ καὶ εἴδωλον, ἀτὰρ φρένες οὐκ ἔνι πάμπαν, 23.103-4).[1] The episode, like the meeting between Odysseus and Anticleia in the *Odyssey* or Aeneas and Anchises in the *Aeneid*, is an enactment of the totality of separation which death brings. Patroclus' vivid phrase, ψυχαί, εἴδωλα καμόντων, brings home to Achilles the terrible insubstantiality of the dead (23.72). So far, Achilles has thought only in terms of his own passion, satisfying his longing, expressing his hate and anger, "taking joy in destructive grief" (23.10). Patroclus' shade and Achilles' experience in 99-104 recall him to the universal laws of death and separation and to larger processes beyond his individual grief. Achilles obeys. He prepares at once to perform the rites which will mark his final severance from the body. That realization of a broader perspective, already intimated in the

[1] For Achilles' understanding of death and its importance in the poem see McFarland (above, p. 11, note 1) *passim*, though McFarland goes too far in subjectivizing Achilles and stressing a kind of modern, Hamlet-like *Angst*. On the problems of the *phrenes* of 23.103-4 see Paul Mazon, *Introduction à l'Iliade* (Paris 1942) 223-4. On *phrenes* in general see Paolo Vivante, "Sulle designazioni Omeriche della realtà psichica," *Arch. Glott. Ital.* 41 (1956) 133-5, with the bibliography on pp. 113-15.

landscape of 59-61, will continue into the next book and make possible the resolution of the mutilation theme.

The important scene with Patroclus' ghost intimates a certain sad futility involved in all this attention to the corpse. It initiates, therefore, a movement of releasing Achilles from his possessive violence. And this movement must take place before the reconciliation of book 24 is possible. With the coming of a new dawn and the sinking down of the raging flames of the night before (23.226-30),[1] there appear a fresh atmosphere of calm and a new possibility for Achilles to make his peace with the dead.

Exhausted, Achilles withdraws from the ashes of the pyre and sleeps a "sweet sleep" (23.231-2). This sleep brings an even deeper confirmation of that initial sleep and calm which preceded the visit of Patroclus' shade (23.62-4) and the burning of the body. The roaring flames and raging sea (ὁ δ' ἔστενεν οἴδματι θύων, 23.230) belong to the wild passion of the night which has passed. But they belong also to the passion and violence amid which Achilles has lived since book 19. They form one of Homer's natural "involuntary symbols" ("unwillkürliche Symbole," to use Schadewaldt's apt phrase).[2] Now they withdraw along with the slow ebbing of the destructive savagery within the great hero. The dawn, described in vivid, highly individualized lines (23.226-7), spreads over the seas and brings light in a metaphorical as well as a literal sense.[3]

In book 21 the world of nature arose in the figure of the torrential river to protest against Achilles' savagery, only to be defeated by the pure anthropomorphism of Hephaestus' aid. That scene marked the furthest extension of Achilles' monomaniac glory and violence. There the power of his wrath expanded to enfold nature itself. In this book too the winds are summoned to stir up the blaze at Patroclus' pyre. Yet the sea, the dawn, the woods of Ida and its mighty "high-leafing oaks" and thickets (23.117-22), all remind us again of those vast, impersonal, non-anthropomorphic forces surrounding human life, the eternal, foreign frame of the elements which punctuate the close, tight battle scenes: the great, open aether at the end of book 8, or the great rivers of the Troad which level the

[1] The nocturnal atmosphere is emphasized by the repetition, παννύχιοι . . . πάννυχος, in 23.217-18.

[2] Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 331.

[3] Elsewhere too an important dawn is set apart by a vivid two-line description: 11.1-2, which introduces the great day of battle which stretches over the next eight books. See Van der Valk (above, p. 1, note 2) 48-50.

works of man at the beginning of book 12, or the "earth, heavens, and sea" and the "great force of River Ocean" which encompass Achilles' shield (18.483, 607). Nature as an image of impersonal, independent, and inflexible reality, ever present in the similes, once more bounds the horizons of Achilles' world, as it did when he sat alone, "gazing out on the limitless sea" in book 1 (350). Now too he gazes out over the sea, ἰδὼν ἐπὶ οἴνοπα πόντον (23.143), as he addresses the Spercheius and cuts off the lock dedicated to it.[1] And along with this broad, autonomous frame of nature there emerges, stronger and stronger, the pressure of the ultimate laws of life and death and of Zeus who is in part the embodiment of those laws.

Achilles can now give quiet instructions about the final tendance of the pyre and the corpse (23.236-44). He can speak softly, even tranquilly, of his own death and funeral (23.244). Immediately afterwards he gives the order for the funeral games (23.257ff.). The games are not merely a necessary part of the rites for the dead. They also serve the artistic function of creating a long, unemotional episode which confirms the quieter tone. What is more, they restore an atmosphere of orderly and reasonable social procedures.[2] In the tact and courtesy of Achilles' deportment the barbarity of his wrath in books 21-22 fades from view, and the violation of civilized values in those books is somewhat soothed.[3] This movement in book 23 lays the essential foundation for the resolution of the wrath in book 24. In the management of the games Achilles displays a renewed respect for the sanctions of civilized society. He begins to find his way back to that "reverence" and "pity" (*aidos* and *eleos*) which the encounter with Priam will call forth,

Here the violence of the war appears as something remote and past. Weapons or armor won in bloody contests can now have a place among the "brilliant prizes" for these trials of heroic strength

[1] Note the sea in 24.12-13 also. For the enframing function of nature generally see Vivante (above, p. 27, note 2) 73ff.

[2] See Owen (above, p. 13, note 1) 235; Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 215: "Achilles has returned to society as its master, quiet-voiced, a little aloof, but just and generous, doubling the prizes and freely adding extra ones . . . If he had upset the balance he now begins to restore it. Order slowly spreads around him in a widening ring."

[3] Mazon (above, p. 51, note 1) 224 remarks, "On a été parfois choqué de voir succéder chez lui à un excès de douleur tant de calme et de mesure: le désespéré de la veille est devenu le plus attentif et le plus courtois des agônothètes."

which are no longer of a life-and-death seriousness.[1] The death of Sarpedon is mentioned once, that of Asteropaeus twice, but they seem events long past.[2] Having surrendered the body of Patroclus to the flames, Achilles can speak of his companion as a sorrowful memory. The cutting edge of his pain is dulled by this atmosphere of removal from the war and by the formal gesture of commemoration constituted by the games themselves.[3]

The violence of an Achilles, however, is not easily stilled. He repeats the cruel contrast between the two corpses (cf. 23.19-23). In his final farewell to Patroclus he reiterates the savagery of the mutilation theme: "I shall not give Hector son of Priam to the flames to devour, but to dogs (23.182-3). The zeugma of the verb δαπτέμεν in 183 (to be taken figuratively with "fire," but literally with "dogs") condenses into a single line the contrast and complementarity between Achilles' love and his hatred, between Patroclus and Hector, funeral rites and outrage. Yet the reference to the mutilation of Hector's body is here milder than those savage utterances of book 22, milder even than his statement earlier in the book to let "the dogs divide it raw" (23.21). The exhaustion and spent energies of the new day (23.226-32), following upon the enlarged sense of the futility of death in the scene with Patroclus' shade earlier, have begun to blunt the uncompromising, blind hatred of the corpse theme.

The futility of venting one's passion on the dead receives an unexpected turn in the next line. Achilles said in 182-3, "I shall give Hector not to the fire to devour, but to the dogs." But the narrative goes on, "So he spoke threatening, but the dogs did not toil about (Hector)" (23.184).[4] Divine interference, rather unexpectedly, cancels Achilles' threat. Aphrodite "warded off the dogs and anointed the corpse with ambrosial oil that he might not rend it dragging it about" (185-7). Apollo keeps the sun from withering Hector's limbs (188-91). At the climax of the corpse theme in 22.345-54 Achilles had told the dying Hector, "There would be

[1] Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 346 observes "das schöne Leben . . . , Festlichkeit, Spiel und Freude" after the immersion in "dem Bereich des Tods."

[2] Among the prizes relevant here are the horses of Aeneas (23.291-2), the breastplate of Asteropaeus (560-1), the armor of Sarpedon won by Patroclus (800), and the sword of Asteropaeus (807-8).

[3] See 23.280-4, 619-20, 748-9.

[4] Compare the use of the same verb at 21.203: ἀμφεπένοντο.

no one who would ward off (ἀπαλάλκοι) the dogs from your head" (22.348). Now, suddenly, such a defender appears and does indeed "ward off" the dogs (ἄλαλκε 23.185): not a mortal, but a god.[1] For the first time the gods intervene to check Achilles' outrage of Hector's corpse. The divine protection which Thetis offered to the body of Patroclus (19.23-33; cf. ἀλαλκεῖν ἄγρια φῦλα, 19.30) is now fulfilled for Hector. This new intervention of the gods foreshadows the divinely arranged restoration of the body in book 24. But it also points to the beginning of resolution of the corpse theme and the violence which it contains.

It is significant that the gods do not intervene until such an action is already intelligible in terms of the human motivation. In the scene with Patroclus' shade Achilles has just experienced the emptiness of death in a calm, inward way which begins to change his relation to the corpse theme. Soon he will sink exhausted near the ashes of the consumed pyre (23.231-2). With the completion of Patroclus' funeral his passionate hatred for Hector and the desire to mangle his corpse begin ever so slightly to diminish. The games have an important role in this movement. They effect an important transition from Achilles' fixed monomaniac concern with the corpse and with death to human fellowship and to the material joys of life implied in the contest's "brilliant prizes" (ἀγλά' ἄεθλα 23.262): horses and tripods and slave women, bronze and iron, weapons and tools.

The gods' intervention in behalf of Hector's corpse in 23.185-91, then, is not an arbitrary, isolated motif, but completes a natural movement within the whole course of the action. Homer's gods, as has been often observed, do not overrule natural human motivation. They are a means of seeing the human action from a different angle, a wider and perhaps more mysterious perspective than that afforded by usual human vision.[2]

In another way too, the intervention of Aphrodite and Apollo here shifts the emphasis away from Achilles' violence. It is unclear why the presence of *two* gods is required. Possibly the division of labor between Aphrodite (who keeps off dogs) and Apollo (who

[1] See also 17.153.

[2] See Dodds (above, p. 25, note 1) chap. 1; Whitman, (above, p. 3, note 1) chap. 10; Fränkel (above, p. 5, note 2) 71ff., especially 72-6; Pierre Chantraine, "Le divin et les dieux chez Homère," in *La notion du divin depuis Homère jusqu'à Platon, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique* (Fondation Hardt) 1 (1952) 92-3.

protects the body from the sun) serves to indicate a broader threat to the corpse. So far, the main threat has been mutilation or scavenging beasts. But, as the violence of this human outrage of the corpse fades, we see other, larger, and more impersonal forces at work. The dawn, the sea, the winds summoned by Iris, the laws of Hades expounded by Patroclus' shade have all given those natural laws a firmer, more insistent reality. Thus the danger of the sun's drying up the body and "withering the skin on sinews and limbs" (23.190-1) is not merely part of the grisly realism contained in the corpse theme,[1] but points to the constant forces of nature. These forces, in turn, place Achilles' actions into a perspective of the broad human and divine sanctions which emerge finally in book 24.

[1] So, e.g., 19.26-7 and 22.509.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESOLUTION: BOOK 24

Just after the games Achilles drags Hector's corpse behind his chariot once more (24.14-18). Yet the tone of this action is markedly different from that of the previous books. The mood of exhaustion, restlessness, futility begun in 23.100-7 makes itself felt. Achilles is unable to sleep (24.4), twists and turns in longing for Patroclus (24.5-6), thinks of past adventures and trials (7-8), remembers, and weeps (9). Finally he wanders by the sea and comes to Hector's corpse as a sort of final resort, a tired, faded expedient, an almost mechanical reflex which offers no release and stirs no passion. Reflective and somewhat abstracted from the present, he looks more to the past than to the immediate situation (24.7-9). There is a rare (for Homer) predominance of mental activity over physical. Though Homer says that Achilles "in his wrath outraged the corpse" (24.22), there is little description of actual violation. Homer gives only the details of tying it to the chariot (15) and dragging it three times around the mound of Patroclus (24.14-16), until he stops at his tent and "lets him lie there face up, stretching him out in the dust" (24.17-19):

> αὖτις ἐνὶ κλισίῃ παυέσκετο, τὸν δέ τ' ἔασκεν
> ἐν κόνι ἐκτανύσας προπρηνέα· τοῖο δ' Ἀπόλλων
> πᾶσαν ἀεικείην ἄπεχε χροΐ φῶτ' ἐλεαίρων

The words ἔασκεν, παυέσκετο, and perhaps προπρηνέα convey that weariness, almost indifference, which we have traced from the beginning of book 23. The realization of the emptiness of death (cf. 23.103-4) can apply to the corpse of Hector as well as of Patroclus.

Now the gods intervene once more to protect Hector's body. Apollo "pities" (ἐλεαίρων 24.19) Hector and "keeps off all maltreatment from his flesh" (πᾶσαν ἀεικείην ἄπεχε χροΐ, 24.19). Homer sounds the ἀεικείη motif of the previous books (as he does again in 24.22), only to suggest that it is drawing to a close. The scene is obviously parallel with the intervention of Aphrodite and Apollo to protect the corpse in 23.182-91 (note that 24.21 = 23.187). But

there is a significant difference. The gods' protection of Hector in book 23 answered Achilles' threat to the corpse (23.182-3). Here, though the threat of mangling remains, it is present only in remote form, almost as an afterthought (μή μιν ἀποδρύφοι ἑλκυστάζων, 24.21).

The pity which Apollo feels for Hector in 24.19 soon extends to the gods in general. "Achilles thus outraged brilliant Hector in his wrath [24.22], but the blessed gods began to pity him (ἐλεαίρεσκον) looking on and began to urge sharp-watching Hermes to steal the body" (24.22-4).[1] Earlier only the river of Troy, the Scamander, attacked Achilles for his lack of pity (21.147) and his violence (21.214-21). Then Olympian force defeated the river's intervention. Now the Olympians themselves come around to the position which they previously rejected. Reasonableness and compassion haltingly begin to assert themselves over main force.

Apollo's reproach to the gods in the ensuing speech (24.33-54) gives the corpse theme its final turn toward resolution. He criticizes the gods for their harshness, a criticism which *a fortiori* includes Achilles. Whereas the gods have twice been said to "pity" Hector (24.19 and 23), Apollo charges that Achilles has "destroyed pity" (ἔλεον μὲν ἀπώλεσεν, 44). Achilles, he says, is savage, "like a lion" (λέων δ' ὥς ἄγρια οἶδεν, 41). In book 22, as we have seen above, the wild animal imagery expressed the relentless violence of Achilles. There it functioned decoratively and objectively, as a fact in the narrative. This passage injects a new element. For the first time we hear pronounced a direct, clear, unambiguous value judgment on that savagery.[2] The criticism of Achilles implicit in the previous narrative is now explicit. Apollo calls Achilles "destructive," ὀλοῷ Ἀχιλῆϊ (39). This is one of the very rare moments in Homer where the adjective ὀλοός is applied to a person (compare its frequent use with the personifications, Moira and Ker).[3] For the first time too the funeral of Hector appears as a real possibility and with it the due lamentation of wife, mother, son, father over his body (35-8).

Yet Apollo's speech, like his previous intervention in 23.185ff.,

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[1] On the scene see Owen (above, p. 13, note 1) 239-40.

[2] See Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 333-4; Sandstrom (above, p. 10, note 1) 29-30.

[3] The word is used of Zeus in 3.365 and of Apollo in 22.15. The only other place where it is used of a mortal is in 23.439, Odysseus objecting to Antilochus' conduct in the race, where the tone is not entirely serious. Compare also the emphatic οὐλομένην in *Iliad* 1. 2.

also has links with the human motivation in the preceding narrative. It is connected specifically with the sense of the emptiness of death, the futility of seeking to assuage grief by tormenting a corpse, and the atmosphere of spent passion. These changes of attitude are all specific manifestations of a general mood which sets in with the scene between Achilles and Patroclus and the burning out of Patroclus' pyre. Apollo's phrase in 35, "corpse though he is" (νέκυν περ ἐόντα,) adds to these changes in the human realm a god's coolly precise and realistic comment on the valuelessness of a corpse. The phrase is also an indirect comment on the futility of Achilles' mutilating it.[1]

That recognition of the corpse's status among the phenomena of nature receives startling confirmation in Apollo's last line (24.54):

κωφὴν γὰρ δὴ γαῖαν ἀεικίζει μενεαίνων.

The phrase "dumb earth" is a strong and effective metaphor in a poet who uses metaphors with discrimination. It restates from the divine point of view what Achilles began to discover as a mortal in his meeting with Patroclus' shade: φρένες οὐκ ἔνι πάμπαν (23.104). The contrast between this "dumb earth" and Achilles "maltreating" the corpse "in his rage" (ὣς ὁ μὲν Ἕκτορα δῖον ἀείκιζεν μενεαίνων, 24.22) reinforces the tragic dichotomy between inert matter and human energies, between nature's impersonal processes and man's emotional involvements and values. It also stresses the irrational savagery of Achilles' attempt to vent his passion on what now lacks sense and spirit. The inner passions of Achilles are thus brought into confrontation with reality, the reality of what death is. His protest against the laws of nature is tragic; seen from the Olympian distances, it is also wild and savage. In the end Achilles will bring together, if fitfully, Olympian perspective and human passion (see 24.525ff.).

It is appropriately a god who conveys this message and gives expression to the laws of reality. Apollo, looking upon the corpse from the serener fastnesses of Olympus, sees its place in the total framework of nature. Hence his words, like his earlier action in 23.188-91, once more point outward to the impersonal processes of corruption and decay, outward to the larger natural order of which

[1] Compare also 24.20, καὶ τεθνηότα περ. Both phrases emphasize the defencelessness, helplessness, and in a sense worthlessness of the dead; and thus they reinforce the discovery made by Achilles himself in 23.103f.

death is a part. Apollo's speech, therefore, furthers the movement begun early in book 23 of expanding the horizons of the narrative beyond Achilles' exclusive, inward, self-centered passion.

Despite some ineffective resistance by Hera (55-63) (who is a natural enough champion of the cruel treatment of an enemy)[1] Zeus decides firmly in favor of Hector and announces the ransom of Hector's body (75-6). His conciliatory tone (cf. especially 65) is in keeping with the calmer mood of the end. In this firm and orderly atmosphere on Olympus, the gods speak of pity and reverence (44). Persuasion rather than force guides the action now. The god's civilized behavior prefigures the calmer, more reasonable attitude in the human realm. Achilles' treatment of the corpse and his holding it "by the ships" can appear in a clearer, more sober light: it is the action of a "raging heart" (φρεσὶ μαινομένῃσιν, (24.114 = 135). The "father of gods and men" (103) speaks these reproachful words to Thetis, and she relates them to Achilles. Apollo's criticism of Achilles (24.39ff.) receives validation from Zeus himself.

The firmness of Zeus' will in 64-76 in itself marks the stabilizing return of a larger order. To this order Achilles also will soon accede. Just as the violent, threatening, deceived Zeus of the early and middle books gives way to the powerful, but gentle monarch sure of his authority here in book 24, so Thetis is able to convince Achilles by persuasion to do the gods' will. Indeed, not only does she succeed in persuading him, but she persuades him with remarkable ease.

Thetis promptly reports Zeus' words to Achilles (24.128-37). His reply is surprisingly short and abrupt (24.139-40):

> τῇδ' εἴη· ὃς ἄποινα φέροι καὶ νεκρὸν ἄγοιτο,
> εἰ δὴ πρόφρονι θυμῷ Ὀλύμπιος αὐτὸς ἀνώγει.

The violence which has extended over the last eight books is resolved in three syllables, "So be it," τῇδ' εἴη.[2]

Achilles' acquiescence is sudden. Yet it is the fruit of a slow and agonized movement in the poem from passion to clarity, a movement which culminates in the Olympian harmony of the preceding scene. But Achilles' rapid acceptance is humanly intelligible against the background of his weariness and exhaustion since the

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[1] Cf. 4.31ff.

[2] I follow the punctuation of T. W. Allen in the Oxford Classical Text. For the other possibilities see Owen (above, p. 13, note 1) p. 241, note 1.

beginning of book 23. For him too passion has ebbed; and he is ready to relinquish the object of his hate, just as he has relinquished to the flames and to Hades the object of his love.

In 24.140 Achilles does not even speak of Hector by name. He is merely "the corpse." It is as if Achilles has absorbed something of Apollo's awareness of the large natural order and the real status of the dead (cf. 24.54). Hence his consent to the ransom has almost the tone of indifference: "Who brings the ransom, let him also take the corpse" (24.139).

From this point Achilles stands in a new relation to the corpse theme. The language of mutilation now comes from the Trojan side. Hecuba's words of 24.206-14 take us vividly back to the unleashed savagery of book 22. When she says that Achilles did not "pity or revere" Hector (24.207-8), she is quoting Hector's own words before the climactic battle (22.123-4). Apollo had set those words into a wider perspective (24.44), but Olympian calm has not reached to the wailing women in Troy. When she calls Achilles "savage," ὠμηστής, literally "raw-eating" (207), she is recalling his own terrible threat to eat Hector's raw flesh (ὤμ' ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα ἔδμεναι, 22.347). She herself reaches a pitch of hatred and savagery which equals that of Achilles' terrible threat in book 22: she wishes that she could devour his liver (24.212-3). Such an act, she says, would bring requital for Hector (τότ' ἂν τιτὰ ἔργα γένοιτο / παιδὸς ἐμοῦ, 24.213-4). This idea of "repayment" further stresses the reciprocal connection between her speech here and Achilles' in 22.346-54. It is worth noting that her attribute of Achilles in 207, ὠμηστής, appears only here in the *Iliad* of a human being. Earlier in this book it is used of fish in a context of hunting and killing (24.82). The other two occurrences come, appropriately, in contexts describing the violation of a corpse by scavenging birds (11.453-4) or dogs (22.67).

Another detail of Hecuba's speech, though less significant than those mentioned above, is also worth noting. We have already observed the possible aptness of the epithet "swift" when used of dogs in scenes describing the exposure of a corpse (cf. 18.283 and above, p. 22 note 1). Hecuba expresses that idea of swiftness in an unusual phrase: ἀργίποδας κύνας ἆσαι (24.211). The adjective ἀργίποδας occurs only here in Homer.[1] The more individualized expression is appropriate to Hecuba's special involvement with

[1] Cf., however, 18.283 and 578, and p. 27, note 1, above.

the mutilation theme in this passage. She has already lamented over Hector on two occasions (22.86-9, 430-6) and will do so again at the very end (24.747-59). Hence Homer has no need to develop another picture of her reaction to the horror of mutilation. Yet the phrase ἀργίποδας κύνας ἆσαι presents in a condensed and powerful manner the special impact which that theme has on Hecuba.

Hecuba's grief here is the culmination of all the grimness and despair surrounding the corpse theme in previous scenes. The clause ὅτε μιν τέκον αὐτή recalls her cry on the wall when she called upon the son "whom I myself bore" (22.87) and feared that "swift dogs would eat him" (κύνες ταχέες κατέδονται) "very far apart from us" (ἄνευθε . . . μέγα νῶϊν, 22.88-9). Now those apprehensions are fully borne out. She cries, "Let us weep sitting *far apart* in the halls (κλαίωμεν ἄνευθεν, 24.208-9). Andromache's fuller image of worms eating the corpse "by the curved ships apart from (Hector's) parents (νόσφι τοκήων) when the dogs have their fill" (κύνες κορέσωνται, 22.508-9) is now condensed into Hecuba's single line, ἀργίποδας κύνας ἆσαι ἑῶν ἀπάνευθε τοκήων (24.211). These two passages are the only instances in the *Iliad* of this expression "apart from parents." [1] The elements of Andromache's speech at the end of book 22 thus not only return in a new combination and in a varied form, but have a greater poignancy, for it is now the mother who "bore him" (24.210) who gives the detail of Hector's corpse being "far from his parents."

Hecuba's language, therefore, draws upon the accumulated horror and pathos of the mutilation theme in the preceding books. Her entire speech perpetuates that violence, justifying one atrocity by another: τότ' ἂν τιτὰ ἔργα γένοιτο . . . (24.213).

Although the resolution of the corpse theme is now in sight, Hecuba's outburst is a reminder that the savagery released by the war still lingers and can flare up again despite the compassionate and conciliatory purposes of Zeus. Homer remains a realist to the end.

Priam can still imagine the worst when he asks Hermes if Achilles has "cut up Hector limb from limb and set him out for his dogs" (ᾗσι κυσὶν μελεϊστὶ ταμὼν προὔθηκεν Ἀχιλλεύς, 24.409). As in the case of Andromache and Hecuba, those closest to the dead utter the most vivid descriptions of mutilation. Priam's

[1] Cf. also the different expression of this idea in 19.421-2, discussed above, chapter V, with p. 45, note 1. Also 4.477-8 = 17.301-2.

non-formulaic line (μελεϊστί only here in the *Iliad*) recalls Achilles' ὤμ' ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα (22.347), though naturally with its hyperbole softened. Hermes' answer, however, is consoling. "The dogs and birds did not yet eat him," he replies (οὔ πω τόν γε κύνες φάγον οὐδ' οἰωνοί, 24.411). The Olympian's use of the formula contrasts with the vivid and individualized language of the father in 409. He uses the grim formula of mutilation only to give reassurance that the mutilation has not taken place. Yet, as noted earlier (Chapter V), the combination of κύνες and οἰωνοί is a rather uncommon formula in the *Iliad*. It occurs in the proem (1.4-5) and is twice used in Achilles' exultation over the dying Hector (22. 335-6, 354). Hermes' statement (24.411), οὔ πω τόν γε κύνες φάγον οὐδ' οἰωνοί, echoes Achilles' words in 22.335-6, σὲ μὲν κύνες ἠδ' οἰωνοὶ / ἑλκήσουσ' ἀϊκῶς. Homer evokes the stark, uncompromising savagery of Achilles' hatred just when that savagery is about to give way. The absolute fixity of Achilles' determination that Hector will not be buried (22.345-54) yields to a more human flexibility. Achilles' gradual shift from the attitudes of that scene provides the deeper human background for Hermes' confident assurances to Priam here.

Hector "lies by the ships of Achilles, there in his tent," Hermes goes on, "and his flesh is not rotted, nor do worms eat him who eat men slain in battle" (24.414-5). The realistic details of rotting and worms occur now for the third and last time in the poem. We are strongly reminded of Andromache's speech at the end of book 22. But here, in the mouth of a god, and a helpful god, these grim details have lost something of their horror. They are part of a recognition of a natural order which is working upon Achilles too.

Achilles still drags the body ἀκηδέστως (417 and cf. 22.465). But, Hermes adds, "he does not disfigure it" (οὐδέ μιν αἰσχύνει, 24.418). This last phrase reinforces the point of Hermes' first line (411): the body is safe from the most dreaded physical outrage, rending or tearing by men or animals.

Hermes performs his office tactfully. In his expression of 418, οὐδέ μιν αἰσχύνει, he is careful to replace Achilles' harsh ἀεικίζειν (22.336, 395, 404) with the somewhat gentler word, αἰσχύνειν. This term is rare in the mutilation theme and does not have the accumulated associations of horror which have accreted to ἀεικίζειν. Aside from 18.180 (discussed above, Chapter III), it occurs in contexts of mutilation only here and in Priam's own speech in

22.71-6. Priam spoke there of dogs "disfiguring" the "shame," i.e. the genitals, of an old man (αἰδῶ τ' αἰσχύνωσι κύνες κταμένοιο γέροντος, 22.75). In that passage the old king supplicated his son, appropriately enough, in terms of social and moral norms and hence relies on value-words like ἐπέοικεν, καλά, αἰσχύνωσιν.[1] These words are also expressive of the ἦθος of his situation: the king's concern with the moral values of his people. They are harsh words, but they also reflect the father's place as educator, guide, instiller of values. They are complementary to Hecuba's appeal to her motherhood, the woman's basic role as the giver and nurturer of life (22.83ff.). Here in book 24 Hermes not only echoes Priam's earlier speech, but also chooses a word which is especially suited to Priam's sense of proprieties and to his special relation, both as father and as king, to the body of his son.

Hector's body, says Hermes, is not just "by the ships" (as Priam thought), but "by the ship there in the tent" (παρὰ νηῒ / αὔτως ἐν κλισίῃσι, 24.412-13). As the ransom is more of a reality, the vague "by the ships," with its echoes of dread when it was uttered by Hecuba and Andromache (22.89, 507), gives way to a more precise and more sheltered locale, the tent in which Priam will break bread with Achilles and in which Hector's body will itself be washed and placed on the wagon for the return to Troy (24.582ff.).[2] Achilles' tent could be the scene of his hospitality and magnanimity, as in the Presbeia of book 9. Now that tent, sheltering the corpse of his bitterest enemy, will be the scene of a magnanimity scarcely imaginable before.

The calmer, expanded perspective and the weary acceptance of death which began early in book 23 bear fruit in the great scene between Achilles and Priam. Here, in the celebrated parable of the twin jars, Achilles takes a broad view of human life and human suffering (24.518-51). His last line in this speech acknowledges the futility of mourning over the dead: "You will achieve nothing in your agony for your son, *nor will you raise him up*, until you suffer some other evil" (550-1). The words οὐδέ μιν ἀνστήσεις (551) indicates in Achilles something of that large compassionate perspective of which hitherto only the gods were capable.

[1] For *aischron* and its place in the structure of Homeric values see Adkins (above, p. 15, note 2) 33ff.

[2] For the problem of the body in the tent see Van Leeuwen (above, p, 34. note 1) *ad* 24.449-56 and 583 and Mazon (above, p. 51. note 1) 222. See also McFarland (above, p. 11, note 1) 204-5.

Achilles thereupon gives the orders for the washing of the corpse (24.582). He himself lifts it on to the bier (24.589): αὐτὸς τόν γ' Ἀχιλεὺς λεχέων ἐπέθηκεν ἀείρας. The warrior who has previously deprived mothers of the lament over a son's body "on the bier" (21.124, 22.87) now himself performs that office for a grieving father. Immediately afterwards he apologizes to Patroclus for releasing Hector's body (24.592-5). At this point of the resolution of the mutilation theme Hector and Patroclus are paired for the last time. This brief speech thus marks the conclusion of a subsidiary theme which has extended from 18.334ff. over all the succeeding books.

In himself lifting the body of Hector upon Priam's cart, as in his gratuitous and unexpected offer soon after to hold back the Greeks long enough to bury Hector (24.656ff.), Achilles reaffirms the gentler side of himself, that side which could win and hold the friendship of the gentle Patroclus. We have seen this side of Achilles in his treatment of the body of the slain Eetion, recounted to Hector by Andromache on the tower (6.417ff.). That promise of a gentleness in Achilles, glimpsed almost as a distant and mysterious prophecy in the words of the wife of the man who is to be Achilles' most hated enemy, is fulfilled at last, although Hector was not to know it while alive (cf. 22.126-8).[1]

Yet the gentleness exists simultaneously with the violence. Achilles' motive for lifting the body aside is the fear that Priam's lamentation might rouse Achilles' wrath and lead him to kill the old man (583-6). So uncertain is Achilles of control over the surges of his emotion. How extreme this violence in Achilles is can be appreciated by reference to Zeus' words earlier (24.157-8 = 186-7), "He (Achilles) is not so witless nor unconsidering nor sinful, but he will attentively spare the suppliant." Though Achilles himself echoes Zeus' words in this scene (24.570), he can envisage, in a flash of anger, overstepping the limits set by Zeus. Thus the savagery contained in the corpse theme throughout the last eight books remains in the background here too and makes us aware of how precarious is this moment of compassion.

With this scene the theme of the mutilation of the corpse essentially concludes. But Homer goes a stage further and shows how

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[1] Lesky (above, p. 3 note 2) 38 remarks that "Achilles' pious care for the body of Eetion [is] related, *oddly enough*, by Andromache . . ." (my italics).

closely that theme is connected with the emergence of the larger order which he has already intimated. Achilles states definitively that the ransoming is accomplished: υἱὸς μὲν δή τοι λέλυται, γέρον, ὡς ἐκέλευες, (24.599). "Let us take thought of food," he says; and he launches abruptly into the myth of Niobe (24.603-620). The myth reveals a fresh and enlarged vision within Achilles of the relation between the dead and the living and a new sense of an obligation to the encompassing totality of life.[1] Grief for the dead has only a partial claim on the living. For all her loss, Niobe "remembered food" (24.602, 613). So, Achilles says, he and Priam should do (24.601).[2] We recall, of course, the great point made about the refusal of food in book 19. There Achilles' rejection of food expressed a larger rejection of everything gentle and life-giving. Food and drink, he had said, "are of no concern in my heart, but slaughter and blood and the painful groaning of men" (19.213-14). Here in book 24 the taking of food is a recognition of the tragic reality of human life, an acknowledgment of the individual's commitment to life's wholeness, continuity, vitality, despite and in the midst of the fearful losses and sufferings which belong to our existence.[3]

This is Achilles' last long speech in the poem. It fulfils through myth his inward release from the self-centered, desperate clinging to the dead and to death which his restoration of Hector's body has accomplished in actual deed. What began for Priam as a journey to the realm of death (ὡς εἰ θάνατόνδε κιόντα, 24. 328) has ended with Achilles' allowing him "to live and see the light of the sun" (24. 558).[4] Through Achilles' tale both *mythos* and *ergon* (to use the terms of later Greek thought) embrace the final accomplishment

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[1] On this larger vision in Achilles see Benardete (above, p. 16, note 4) 1-5 and 16.

[2] For sleep and food in book 24 see 24.2-4, 129-31, 475-6, 641-2.

[3] See Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 219; J. T. Kakridis, "Die Niobesage bei Homer," *RhM* 79 (1930) 121-22; Paolo Vivante, "Homer and the Aesthetic Moment," *Arion* 4 (1965) 427: "It is that in Homer the taking of food is not simply an indispensable routine: it is a moment of peace, a pause between one crisis and the other, a vantage point in which to dwell for a moment in order to draw upon the sources of life and restore the wholeness of existence. Picturing as he does a vitality which is body and soul at the same time, Homer must necessarily stress the physical process which is its medium, he must tell us how the heroes renew their strength from day to day" (now in *The Homeric Imagination*, above, p. 27, note 2, 20).

[4] For the imagery of death in Priam's journey see Whitman (above, p. 3, note 1) 217-18.

of the movement away from death which began in the scene with Patroclus' shade (23.65ff.). The expansive form of myth, itself evidence of a reflective calm in Achilles' own soul, has a fitting place at this suspended moment when deadly enemies can "wonder" at one another (24.628-33) and even the gods sleep (24.677-8).[1]

The myth of Niobe also creates a new framework for understanding the two extremes of Achilles' nature which the mutilation theme has called forth. The myth contains both cruelty and generosity, ruthlessness and tenderness.[2] In their wrath two gods kill all of Niobe's children. In Achilles' bleak line (24.609), τὼ δ' ἄρα καὶ δοιώ περ ἐόντ' ἀπὸ πάντας ὄλεσσαν. The children cannot be buried, for Zeus has turned the people to stone (610-11), an anticipation of Niobe's own fate. But finally, on the tenth day, the gods themselves perform the burial (612): τοὺς δ' ἄρα τῇ δεκάτῃ θάψαν θεοὶ Οὐρανίωνες.

This tale of the killing, refusal of burial, and ultimate mercy not only presents both the hardness and gentleness of the gods. It is a fresh statement of Achilles' relation to the corpse theme. And it is also a parable of Achilles' own behavior. Achilles has destroyed Priam's children, as the gods have destroyed Niobe's. Achilles, like the gods (24.610-11), has obstructed burial; and, like the gods, he will in time grant burial. The gods buried Niobe's children, "on the tenth day" (24.612). Priam's son, thanks to Achilles' generosity, will be buried "on the tenth day" (24.665). Achilles tells the myth of Niobe not just for Priam's benefit. It is the last great effort at self-understanding by this warrior who also sings on the lyre (9.186-7) and reflects on the meaning of human life and the possible emptiness of heroic glory (9.315-22, 401-16). Through his tale of wanton killing and ultimate resolution in the burial of the dead, Achilles reaches out toward comprehending the mystery of his own spirit's terrible suspension between violence and ruth. And, tragic realist that he is, he knows that despite the bright vision of the nymphs (615-16) Niobe, like those other afflicted parents, Hecuba and Priam, is not consoled: ἔνθα λίθος περ ἐοῦσα θεῶν ἐκ

[1] Cf. also 2. 1-2. It is perhaps a sign of the greater calm and broader order at the end of the poem that even Zeus, presumably, sleeps here in book 24. See also Schadewaldt (above, p. 2, note 2) 349.

[2] Cf. the similar note of tenderness in Achilles' simile of 16.7-11, which also speaks of the relation between a mother and her child. For the problems involved in the Niobe myth generally here and a survey of various views see Kakridis (above, p. 66, note 3) 113-22, especially 113-16.

κήδεα πέσσει (24.617). In one of Homer's most moving repetitions Priam, a few lines later, echoes Niobe's words: ἀλλ' αἰεὶ στενάχω καὶ κήδεα μυρία πέσσω (24.639).[1]

The closing lamentation over Hector's corpse satisfies the Trojans' need and longing, hitherto refused, to mourn the body "on the bier." The denial of this right was a recurrent motif in the corpse theme (cf. 21.123-4, 22.86-7 and 352-3). Now, as the populace makes way for the wagon bearing Hector's body, they lay him "on the bier" just before the formal lament begins (24.719-20):

> οἱ δ' ἐπεὶ εἰσάγαγον κλυτὰ δώματα, τὸν μὲν ἔπειτα
> τρητοῖς ἐν λεχέεσσι θέσαν . . .

The addition of the adjective τρητοῖς gives this moment of resolution a special solemnity. The adjective occurs only here in the *Iliad* in this position in the verse and only here in the poem of the bier of the dead (in 3.448 a similar phrase describes the bed where Paris and Helen make love). Here too the warrior shut "outside" for so long is finally brought within the city walls (εἰσάγαγον κλυτὰ δώματα 24.719; cf. 22.440).

Immediately afterwards, at the end of Andromache's lament, the motif of the bier receives a special distinctiveness and a heightened emotionality. She regrets that Hector could not have stretched forth his hands to her "from the bed" (λεχέων ἐκ χεῖρας ὄρεξας, 24.743) and speak some last word which she could cherish in memory "all her nights and days as she pours forth her tears" (24.745).[2] The scene casts the bier-motif into the characteristic tonality of everything which surrounds Hector and Andromache: potential peace and happiness negated by a harsher reality; the tranquil, natural unfolding of normal domestic life abruptly cut off. As Hector on the wall could suppress the reality of his situation and imagine his son growing to manhood, as Andromache could pre-

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[1] The expression κήδεα πέσσειν occurs only in these two places in the *Iliad*, though cf. 1.81. Compare also Achilles' description of himself in 24.542, ἧμαι ἐνὶ Τροίῃ, σέ τε κήδων ἠδὲ σὰ τέκνα. For other parallels between Achilles, Priam, and Niobe see Kakridis (above, p. 66, note 3) 117-20. He notes also the parallel between 22.423 and 24.520-1, already observed by Eustathius, *ad loc.* Kakridis suggests, I think rightly, that Homer has deliberately transformed some features of the Niobe myth in order to make it more closely parallel to the situation of Priam and Achilles.

[2] Note the importance and poignancy of the theme of "remembering" throughout book 24: 24.9, 167, 486, 504, 509 (also 601 and 613). Its recurrence is reflective of the calm and expansive mood of the book.

pare a bath for Hector as if he were going to return from battle, so here she speaks of his dying "in bed," as if Hector's destiny could have included a peaceful death in the safe, domestic world he has tried to defend. His death-scene and the attendants at his death were far otherwise; and the reality of his last words were not of the sort to be treasured in memory.

The *Iliad* contains one last reference to the theme of the mal-treatment of the corpse. Hecuba in her brief lament, describes how Achilles "used to drag you (Hector) often about the tomb of his companion, Patroclus, whom you killed; but not even thus did he raise him up (ἀνέστησεν δέ μιν οὐδ' ὧς, 24.755-6). It was from Hecuba, earlier in this book, that the last brutal statement of violent, barbarous hatred burst forth, when she prayed to devour Achilles' liver (24.212-13). It is appropriate, then, that she should make this final reference to the corpse theme. For her, the bereaved mother, the hatred and savagery of the war are still alive. There can be no reconciliation, analogous to that between Priam and Achilles, between the killer and the mother who gave birth to the victim (cf. ὅτε μιν τέκον αὐτή, 24.210; also 22.87). The bitterness of death and ultimate separation contained in her phrase, "Even so he raised him not up" (756), is not assuaged for her, but only perpetuates the venomous passions of the war. She finds satisfaction in recalling the pain which her son inflicted on his killer. Andromache, in the lament just before Hecuba, also spoke of the deaths which Hector inflicted in battle (24.734-9). But Andromache's mood, unlike Hecuba's, is not exultation over Hector's killings or pleasure in vengefulness, but rather foreboding of what might await her son and insight into the disastrous effects of the continual perpetuation of violence.

It is an indication of Homer's realism about the brutality and the irreparability of the wounds of war that Hecuba's intransigent delight in thoughts of violence and revenge (cf. her τιτὰ ἔργα, 24.213) echoes Achilles' similar words to Priam in the tent. There (24.551) Achilles ended his long, compassionate speech (518ff.) with something like solace, albeit the hard solace of this violent man: "Do not weep unceasingly, for you will not accomplish anything through your agony over your son, *nor will you raise him up*" (οὐδέ μιν ἀνστήσεις, 24.549-51). Hecuba, thinking of Achilles dragging Hector around the tomb of his dead companion, cried, "But even so he did not raise him up" (24.756). On both sides,

then, impulses of gentleness are balanced by resurgences of hatred. Behind Hecuba's words lurks the truth that this moment is but a brief pause in the unresolved hatred which will soon continue in further battles, until Troy falls. Priam's last words to Achilles, when he thanks him for the respite in which the Trojans can bury Hector, confirm the "necessity" which lies upon his city and his people (24.666-7):

ἐνδεκάτῃ δέ κε τύμβον ἐπ' αὐτῷ ποιήσαιμεν,
τῇ δὲ δυωδεκάτῃ πολεμίξομεν, εἴ περ ἀνάγκη.

The closing words of Hecuba, nevertheless, are words of gentleness and calm (24.757-9):

> Now you lie dewy and fresh in the hall (ἑρσήεις καὶ πρόσφατος ἐν μεγάροισι) like to one whom silver-bowed Apollo comes upon and slays with his gentle arrows (οἷς ἀγανοῖσι βέλεσσιν).

This peaceful picture of the composed features of the corpse confirms in reality, within the halls of her own palace, the image which Hermes had reported to Priam in the dangerous no-man's land between the two camps (24.418-19): θηοῖό κεν αὐτὸς ἐπελθὼν/οἷον ἑερσήεις κεῖται. We may recall too the "rosy and ambrosial oil" (ῥοδόεντι . . . ἐλαίῳ . . . ἀμβροσίῳ, 23.186-7) with which Aphrodite had anointed Hector's corpse to keep it fresh,[1] a gentle anticipation, as the corpse theme moves toward resolution, of the beauty which the mother can yet find in this "dumb earth."

The word which Hecuba uses, ἑρσήεις, is unusual in Homer. Aside from 24.419 and 757, it occurs only one other time in the epics, to describe the lotus flower that blooms beneath Zeus and Hera in their *hieros gamos* on Olympus (14.348). The noun ἐέρση though it occurs in the *Iliad* to describe Zeus' "bloody dew" shed over a violent battle (11.53), is also used of Zeus and Hera's bed (14.351). In book 23 it appears in a simile of growing wheat to which is compared Menelaus' pleasure in Antilochus' conciliatory gesture (23.597-600). Both noun and adjective are thus associated predominantly with life, growth, and beauty. It is in keeping with the poem's ultimate movement toward reconciliation that even the mother who makes the last, harsh allusion to the mutilation theme is also the one who finds in the corpse of her son a beauty like that of dew and flowers.

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[1] The adjective ῥοδόεις occurs only here in Homer.

The presentation of Hecuba in this scene is a revealing instance of the comprehensiveness and complexity of the Homeric view of man's response to suffering. On the one hand her lines 755-6 express the unresolved hatred and brutality focused by the corpse theme. On the other hand her talk of the "dewy" body and the "gentle missiles" of Apollo—the god friendly to Hector and the Trojans—cancels, if but for a moment, the horrors of dogs, worms, putrefaction which have pervaded the last books.

The detailed description of the funeral rites at the very end (24.776-804) forms the natural close to a poem which has dwelt on the exposure and violation of the corpse for so many books. The generalizing finality of the last line, "And so they buried Hector tamer of horses" (24.804), seals the peaceful accomplishment of a ritual so long denied. The division between inner and outer, battlefield and Troy, which was a subsidiary aspect of the corpse theme,[1] is resolved when Hector can be mourned in his own halls [2] and in the arms of mother and wife. The elaborate funeral, performed at leisure and with wood gathered from the "outside" from which Troy has been long cut off (cf. 24.662-3), brings a satisfying conclusion to the incomplete, agonized lamentation by father, mother, wife over the lonely, doomed warrior shut outside the walls in book 22.

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[1] Cf. 22.439ff., discussed above, Chapter V; also above, p. 46 note 1.

[2] *Il.* 24.757; cf. 22.440, 510; 24.726.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

The theme of the mutilation of the corpse has three main stages which articulate the rhythm of the poem's movement from intense violence to calm finale. The first stage runs from the last half of book 16 to the end of book 22. Here the brutality toward the bodies of the slain begins to build up in a rapid crescendo. Acts or threats of mutilation begin to accumulate. They reach a first climax in Iris' report of Hector's intention to mount Patroclus' head on a stake (18.176-9). From this point on the mutilation theme focuses on Achilles and Hector. Another climax comes in the battle in the river, where Achilles threatens and executes grotesquely horrible maltreatments on Lycaon, Asteropaeus, and (by implication) on the countless Trojans who cram the Scamander's streams (cf. especially 21.118-27, 200-4). Finally the corpse theme reaches its greatest climax in the death scene of Hector where Achilles threatens to cut up the body and eat it raw (22.345-54).

The second stage is contained in book 23. The high pitch of violence gradually begins to relax early in the book when Patroclus' shade appears to Achilles. Savagery is slowly replaced by a sense of weariness, futility, and the slow ebbing of passion once the body is burned and the separation of death absolute. This mood of exhaustion and spent passion, in turn, helps create the conciliatory atmosphere in which Achilles is able to give Hector's body for ransom. This calmer tone, both aided and expressed in the interlude of the games, also creates the broader and more removed perspective in which, through the gods' censure, we can see Achilles' violence in terms of its excess and its violation of human and natural laws,

Book 24 marks the third stage. The assembly of the gods at the beginning of the book is essential for establishing and clarifying the image of a larger and potentially more humane order. The restoration of this order through Zeus' authority is both a prerequisite for the generosity and compassion within Achilles in book 24 and also a concomitant feature of the stable and quiet, if still bleak, closure of the poem.

Yet the intervention of the gods in restoring Hector's corpse is not a piece of arbitrary epic machinery. The gods' action both grows from and expresses in larger terms the slow subsiding of passions after the peak of book 22; the sense of a broader order of nature in the first third of book 23; and the weary, exhausted comprehension of death which comes to Achilles in the Patroclus scene of 23.69-107. In Achilles' last long speech, with its myth of Niobe, as in the one preceding it which included the parable of the two jars, Achilles shows an awareness of death as part of a more comprehensive order. He sees himself and his infliction of suffering on the Trojans with a dispassionate realism which approaches compassion (cf. 24.542). But his violence and harshness remain ominous possibilities and find an echo in the not dissimilar combination of hatred and serenity in Hecuba (24.755-9).

The gods, Zeus and Apollo, possess the total comprehensiveness of a serene vision of reality. But it can be only the human figures in whom this enlargement of perspective and achievement of calm has the fullest and most intense meaning. The gods, changeless and deathless, pay nothing to achieve their vision of the truth of things. Themselves part of nature's eternal return, they are free of the wrench between impersonal laws and the loves and hates of short-lived mortals. Priam and Niobe "digest" their κήδεα (24.617, 639), but the gods, as Achilles says, are ἀκηδέες (24.526).

For Homer, as for Aeschylus, understanding reality without passion or suffering is not a given part of the human condition. In the world of the *Iliad* the reality is suffering. The task of human life is to win the strength to grasp and accept what "the gods have spun out for wretched mortals" (24.525), that is, what the nature of life is. This Andromache does in her accurate forebodings of Astyanax' fate, and Priam in his awareness of the "necessity" which lies upon Troy, and Achilles in his image of the two jars of Zeus and his myth of Niobe.

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